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PROPHECY AND AUTHORITY

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PROPHECY AND AUTHORITY

A STUDY

IN THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE AND INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

BY

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TO

THE MEMORY OF

MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER

Iste Deus meus et glorificabo eum
Deus Patris mei et exaltabo eum

Ex. 15:2

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due to the Editors of the *American Journal of Theology* for their kind permission to use the material of an article by me on "The Reformation Principle of Exegesis and the Interpretation of Prophecy" which appeared in the issue of July, 1908. I wish also to express my thanks for the helpful criticisms and suggestions of my colleagues and friends, Professor William J. Hutchins, Professor Eugene W. Lyman, and Professor Charles H. A. Wager. To Professor Wager are due my special thanks for the generous assistance he has given me in connection with the progress of my book through the press. Without his help, the imperfections of my work, of which I am only too painfully conscious, would have been even more numerous than they are.

INTRODUCTORY

THE following study has grown out of investigations undertaken some years ago which were designed to form part of a more general work on the History of Biblical Interpretation. But for various reasons it has been found impossible to carry out the original intention. I have therefore determined to publish this section on the Interpretation of Prophecy separately, as I venture to hope that it will meet a need of the present hour. I am quite well aware that there is little demand in these days for works which, on their surface, seem to have only an historical interest. The historical is, unfortunately, apt to be identified with the academic and scholastic, and nothing is tolerated by the reading public which does not have a direct bearing upon the all-engrossing subject of the War. This is natural but it is foolish. A too intense preoccupation with the present is apt to miss its real meaning. There never was a time when historical perspectives were more necessary in order to furnish true insights into the darkness of the present. The approach to contemporary problems through history is the only way in which we can hope to secure ourselves from judgments of passion and prejudice. Therefore I make no apology for the purely historical form in which the present argument is cast, even though it traces movements of thought which in themselves seem often remote from the thoughts and feelings of the hour. The fact that this study was begun and its general conclusions were arrived at when their application to such a

catastrophe as has overtaken civilization was still undreamed of should be regarded as a recommendation rather than a hindrance to its publication. But what has it to do with the present? Directly but little, indirectly much.

At the present time we are witnessing a remarkable recrudescence of the Millennial hope. This hope has burned most brightly at times of great social and political unrest. There have always been many earnest Christians who, oppressed by the apparently insurmountable evils that surrounded them, have been accustomed to look for a sudden and miraculous interposition in their favor; the deliverance which could not be accomplished through any human endeavor must be effected, as they supposed, by the Lord from heaven. What has occurred in the past is occurring again before our eyes. In the face of the awful facts of the present, to which a civilization hardened in materialism finds it difficult to adjust itself, morbidness and hysteria, both in thought and action, are in danger of taking the place of the spiritual obtuseness and superficial shrewdness of the decades just preceding 1914. A universal nervousness has seized society. Panic is spreading among the peoples. In the religious sphere one manifestation of this is the greatly quickened expectation of the speedy coming of the Lord. The interpreters of prophecy are busy with the signs of the times and the calculators claim that they have found at last the key to the Seventy Weeks, the "times, time and a half-time," and the number of the beast.

In a comment upon the twentieth chapter of the Revelation Augustine once said: "It would take a long time to refute the various interpretations of it point by point; but we should rather show how this Scripture is to be

accepted." What he says of the Revelation may be said of prophecy generally. To disprove the various theories of Millennialists from Papias to Pastor Russell would, indeed, be a laborious and a thankless task. To attempt to show that the *principles* which underlie the millennialist interpretation of prophecy must be abandoned, and that an entirely new view of prophecy is to be adopted, is a much more expeditious and effective method of refutation and is one of the aims of this volume. It is this aim which is *directly* connected with a present-day issue. But this aim is a minor one, as the issue itself is of subordinate interest. What it is hoped may be accomplished *indirectly* by the discussion is of far greater importance. If my purpose were simply to attempt to dispose of the Millennial hope, the length and method of the argument would be out of all proportion to its conclusion. The framework would be too large for the picture. But in the method of argument which has been chosen something far more vital is involved than any incidental deduction which may be drawn from it with regard to Millennialist claims. The question of the attitude of the Protestant Churches toward the Scriptures as a principle of authority has been reopened. But it may be objected that nothing could be more inopportune than to renew inspiration controversies at such a time as this, that these controversies have happily died down and are remote from the issues of the present. Will it not be likely to inject again the *odium theologicum* into a world whose cup is already full of bitterness?

On the contrary, it was never more necessary than now to call attention to a controversy which has often been hotly debated but which has been left unsettled. That the inspiration controversies of the last quarter of a

century left the Churches just about where they were before is clear *from the fact that Millennialist theories have made such rapid progress in the last four years, not only among the laity but among the clergy also,* for these theories, as we shall see, are based upon the premise of an infallible Scripture. After all, it is not so easy as is often supposed for the Churches to throw off the habits and prepossessions of two thousand years, especially those prepossessions which are also connected in a very special way with the birth-struggles of Protestantism. And this is not to be altogether deplored. A too ready acquiescence on the part of the Churches in new modes of thought is not to be desired. The conservatism of the Christian religion in its organized forms is not to be deprecated, even though the manifestations in which its conservatism incidentally finds expression may often be unfortunate. Conservatism serves a useful purpose; it preserves historical continuity and the possibilities of organic growth. Let the inherent radicalism of Christianity in the form of individual experience do its work, and let the conservatism of Christianity in the form of ecclesiastical organization do *its* work, and in the end a proper balance will be struck between them. But at this time we are in one of those crises of history when choices must be made along every line of momentous import for civilization. Such times demand an even more earnest effort than usual to face the facts of life and to express our reactions upon them with sincerity. War deals only with realities and we are in an era of war. Therefore, though one can understand the conservatism of the Church and can sympathize with it, the duty of the individual scholar to leave it undisturbed by no means follows.

Now the settlement of the question of the Bible, its nature and authority, is of fundamental importance to the life and effective work of the Protestant Churches. It was by means of the Bible that these Churches fought their revolutionary war against Rome and won their independence, and the Bible has been the source from which they have drawn their inspiration ever since. But there are many indications that the attitude of the Churches toward this *principium* of their ecclesiastical life is confused, irresolute. The explanation of this is simple enough. When the Bible was made the sword of the Protestant spirit with which to do battle with Rome, it was unfortunately sharpened on polemical grindstones and given an edge that might serve against the mediæval armor of Catholicism but was easily blunted under the conditions of modern warfare. When the theory of Scripture which was hammered out in the post-Reformation period became subjected to the newly awakened historical criticism, which flourished more especially in Protestant countries themselves, it failed to meet the test. But the Protestant Churches have not as yet definitely accepted the results of the historical criticism of the Bible or the changed views of its authority which they necessitate. Until this is done these Churches will be unprepared to face in a calm, steady and intelligent way the issues of the present war. If the Bible occupies as fundamental a position in Protestantism as is commonly supposed, uncertainty as to its nature and authority can affect the development of Protestantism only unfavorably. But the preservation of the rigidly dogmatic view of the Bible which modern Protestantism has inherited from the past has become impossible. The facts of science and history conflict with it at every turn.

The attempt of the Protestant Churches to adhere to the dogmatic view of Scripture and at the same time to appropriate the results of modern research in every other field creates a dualism in their intellectual life which in the end must be fatal to their spiritual life and to any fruitful activity. Only when the head and the heart coöperate sincerely can there be security and joy in religious experience. The conviction which prompts to the publication of this volume is that Protestantism must come to terms with itself as to its own *principium* and frankly adopt the results of modern biblical scholarship, if it is to meet the great needs of the times effectively. It is at this point that these studies have very much to do with the war though in an indirect way. May I try, briefly, to make clear how this is so.

There are three lines along which the war is affecting subtly but profoundly our religious thinking; these are in the direction of simplicity, reality and unity. (1) The religion of the camps and the trenches demands a simplification in religion. To simplify religion does not mean to devitalize it by rationalizing it, but to intensify and spiritualize it. To simplify the Christian religion in its present developed form is to attempt to do for it what Jesus did for Judaism, and who will affirm that the simplification which Jesus effected weakened religion? The simplification of religion which is intended in this connection does not imply the banishment of mystery, which calls for the two supreme religious acts of faith and worship. So long as we refuse to accept the mechanistic theory of the universe, we must admit mystery, the existence of something that goes beyond the world of our senses, and the correlative obligation to faith and worship. Coleridge once said: "In wonder all

philosophy began; in wonder it ends; and admiration fills up the interspace. But the first wonder is the offspring of ignorance, the last is the parent of adoration. The first is the birth-throe of knowledge, the last is its euthanasy and apotheosis." If the simplification of religion meant the elimination of mystery, it would mean the death and not the transfiguration of religion. What is meant by the simplification of religion is the elimination of the dogmatic element in it which has contributed to an immeasurable complication of religion. Dogma has had three special manifestations: a dogmatic view of the Church, a dogmatic view of the creeds and a dogmatic view of Scripture. In their rejection of sacerdotalism and the episcopal succession as embodying a doctrinal truth, and not only an historical fact, the most of the Protestant Churches abandoned the dogmatic view of the Church and in principle also the dogmatic view of the creeds. The latter are authoritative not because the Church formulated them but only in so far as they embody the teachings of Scripture. But the Protestant Churches have retained the dogmatic view of Scripture and with it the premise for a complicated interpretation of the Christian religion. The historical view of Scripture inevitably leads to the abandonment of the complex constructions of dogma; it leads to simplicity. (2) It leads also to reality in religion. The men who are fighting this war are face to face with realities, realities of the sternest and most uncompromising sort. They will not be contented with artificiality in religion, nor will the world at large, which is to be influenced by the thought and feeling of the vast home-returning armies for many years to come. Now the premise of a dogmatic theory of Scripture is an unproved premise. Nor has

it the quality of an *axiom* as has often been imagined. The *Testimonium Spiritus Sancti,* which is supposed to apply at this point, may apply to the religious content of Scripture, but it certainly cannot apply to Scripture as a whole. On the contrary this premise can be historically disproved. To adopt it is therefore to inject at once an element of unreality into our religion. The historical appreciation of the Bible obviates this fatal defect. It reconciles the processes of religious research in particular with scientific research generally and thus integrates our religious views with the whole world of human thought and experience. It enables us to reëstablish the unity of brain and heart which the old dogmatic theory of Scripture endangered. But only when the unfortunate dualism between the Church's inherited theories of Scripture and the modern knowledge of the world which it has accepted is dissipated, can it hope to speak in a way to command the attention of a world disciplined to realities by war. (3) There is a third great religious need at the present time, the need of unity. Can the men of our armies who have been accustomed to the necessity and the inspiration of united effort tolerate any longer the denominationalism which has thus far destroyed the unity of Protestantism? Can this vulgar modern counterpart to the tribalism in religion of earlier ages be suffered to continue? Now the premise of denominationalism is the dogmatic view of Scripture. On the dogmatic view, it was very natural to find inspired justification for this or that polity or mode of worship. The succession of bishops, the particular mode of baptism, the philosophic conception of determinism expressed religiously in the doctrine of election and reprobation, the local autonomy of the churches, the belief that

the Bible renders all creeds superfluous — itself erected into a creed — all these forms of ecclesiasticism and many others have sought the dogmatic sanction of Scripture; the unhappy divisions among Protestants have been stiffened into fixed and rigid barriers through the use of the dogmatic mortar of Scriptural authority. Of course it is not to be imagined for a moment that all men are to worship in the same way or to think exactly the same thoughts about God; but the historical interpretation of the Bible will effectually prevent the imputation of divine authority to our personal preferences in ecclesiastical organization or theological thinking. Now it is the denominationalism which is fortified by a dogmatic view of Scripture that is checking our religious life at every turn. It is this denominationalism which more than anything else will prevent the Protestant Churches from making the contribution which they ought to make to the new world-order, to the endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace. And the necessary preliminary to the abandonment of denominationalism in its doctrinal and injurious form is the abandonment of the dogma of Scriptural infallibility.

For these reasons, it has been deemed timely to present this volume to the public. A word must be said to justify the method by which it is hoped to secure the aims in view. The subject chosen is a study of the problem of Predictive Messianic Prophecy as that is revealed in the history of biblical interpretation. The connection of the Millennial Hope with the theory of Predictive Prophecy is of course self-evident. The two stand or fall together. The connection of Predictive Prophecy and the Problem of Authority is also immediate. If there is no such thing as Predictive Messianic Prophecy in the usually accepted

sense of the term, the dogmatic theory of the infallibility of Scripture must be discarded. It is this conclusion which is likely to meet with the most opposition. I have therefore attempted to lead up to it in a way that has not ordinarily been followed, through a study of the connection between the problem of predictive prophecy and the principles of biblical interpretation. The present essay seeks to show that the fact of predictive prophecy has been maintained only by means of a false principle of exegesis, that when a scientific principle of exegesis is adopted the theory of predictive prophecy must be abandoned, and that the scientific principle of exegesis has been formally and finally adopted by the Protestant Churches because of a great religious need and in a profoundly religious interest. By this method of approach it is hoped that both the inevitableness and desirability of the conclusion will be made apparent.

May I add one final word of personal confession. I am aware that the views here expressed differ in form from the views of those to whom this essay is dedicated. But it is because I believe so firmly that there is a

Faith beyond the forms of faith

and that it is this inner faith alone which truly unites the living with the living and with those whom we wrongly call the dead that I have dared to inscribe this first book of mine to the cherished memory of my Father and my Mother.

The Oberlin Graduate School
of Theology.
June 25, 1918.

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PART I

THE PATRISTIC PERIOD

PROPHECY AND AUTHORITY

CHAPTER I

THE EXTENT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PATRISTIC ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY

THE apologetic of the Primitive Church had its character determined, as any effective apologetic must be determined, by the difficulties which were presented to believers as children of the age in which they lived and by the character of the attack from without which they were compelled to meet.

I

It might naturally be supposed that the anti-Jewish polemic would be found to control the character of the earliest Christian writings. The first thing the Church did was to differentiate itself from Judaism. "Christianity did not believe in Judaism but Judaism in Christianity," says Ignatius. The Christian Church sprang from the Jewish Church. It made the distinct claim that its founder, Jesus, was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet the Gentile Christians in the name of Jesus discarded the Jewish ceremonial system commanded in those Scriptures, and, as a world religion, Christianity asserted its independence of all nationalistic limitations. "It is absurd," says Ignatius again, "to profess Christianity and to Judaize." The Jew naturally

regarded the Christian as a bastard and no true son of Abraham. He denied that the Nazarene who had laid down the principles which logically led to the abrogation of the law and to the denationalization of the Mosaic religion could possibly be the Messiah promised in the law. Was Jesus the Messiah? This question was the crucial question between Jew and Christian whenever the two parties joined in debate. The anti-Jewish polemic would therefore be naturally summed up in the argument from prophecy. Did Jesus fulfil the predictions of the Messiah in the Old Testament?

But the importance of the debate between Jew and Christian and its influence upon early Christian literature must not be unduly emphasized. The anti-Jewish polemic, that is, the attempt to meet the arguments actually advanced by Jews themselves against Christianity, appears to have soon become polemic only in name. With the transfer of Christianity to Gentile territory and the separation of the Church from the Synagogue, effected by Paul, the prick of Jewish opposition ceased to be so acutely felt. While Paul himself was engaged in a warfare with the Jews of the most vital kind and while the author of the Gospel of Matthew conducts his argument from prophecy with an actual Jewish audience in mind, when we come to the post-apostolic period and more particularly to the writings of the Apologists, it is more than doubtful if we have the right to speak of an anti-Jewish polemic in the strict sense of the term. A work like the Dialogue with Trypho, it is true, is nominally directed against the Jews, but, as a recent investigator points out, the anti-Jewish arguments in this and similar works are opposed not so much to what the Jews actually said, as to what the Christians thought they might say.

The Jew in these writings is "the Jew as the Christian imagined him; but the Jew as the Christian imagined him was the heathen, the heathen, moreover, who is willing to accept the Gospel but at the same time stumbles at it." The anti-Jewish polemic thus turns out to be a Gentile apologetic, in other words, an attempt to meet the difficulties which intelligent Gentiles themselves found in the way of accepting Christianity. What were some of these difficulties? A glance at the Greek Apologists will furnish an answer to this question.

II

An intelligent Gentile, especially if he were at all trained in the philosophy of the times, would find three main difficulties in Christianity. These were: the ceremonial system of the Old Testament, the recent origin of Christianity, and the person of Christ. It will be necessary to elaborate each of these points at some length.

While the Church had differentiated itself from Judaism it had retained the Scriptures of Judaism. This singular fact, though ultimately of inestimable value to Christianity in that it has enabled it to connect itself organically with history rather than with philosophy, has placed it at times at a serious tactical disadvantage. At no point has this been more evident than in the matter of the ceremonial. The Jew was not slow to point out the inconsistency of retaining the Old Testament as the Christian Scriptures and rejecting the ceremonial system, "the commands of God," which made up so large a part of these Scriptures. But even without this Jewish taunt the problem was sufficiently serious for the Christian. How could his non-ceremonial religion be vindicated out

of a ceremonial Scripture? The difficulty was further aggravated by philosophical considerations. To one who entertained the Platonic and transcendental view of God a ceremonial system was positively absurd. Thus the earliest of the Apologists, Aristides, defines God as one "who is without beginning and without end, immortal, and self-sufficing, above all passions and infirmities," and draws the conclusion from this that "he requires no sacrifice and libation, nor any of the things that appear to sense." The Apologists, it is true, in rejecting the ceremonial system on the basis of their conception of God, are usually arguing against the heathen ceremonial, but their principles logically involve a repudiation of the Jewish ceremonial as well, and accordingly we find the author of the Epistle to Diognetus characterizing the Jewish ceremonial as a "superstition utterly ridiculous and unworthy of notice." But what was to be done with this obstreperous mass of ceremonial material, so uncongenial alike to Christian principles and philosophic ideas of God and yet contained in the Christian's own Scriptures? Three ways were adopted to meet this difficulty. The Apologists in general simply ignored the ceremonial and laid all the emphasis upon the prophetic side of the religion of the Old Testament. The prophets were looked upon as the inspired teachers of morals and righteousness. "God," says Theophilus, "gave a law and sent holy prophets to teach the race of men that each one of us might understand that there is one God, and they taught us to refrain from idolatry, adultery and murder." From this point of view the prophets are utilized as teachers of Christian morals and of a spiritual, non-ceremonial religion. But

this method is an avoidance of the difficulty, not its solution.

The author of the Epistle of Barnabas adopts a much bolder course. While this epistle is, properly speaking, didactic rather than apologetic, yet its attitude toward the ceremonial is very instructive. According to the very radical view of the author the ceremonial system was not simply abrogated in the new dispensation; it was never intended to be construed literally. Moses spoke "in the spirit" with regard to the food laws, for example. The observance of the letter was due to an evil angel, and those passages in the Old Testament, especially in the Prophets, which repudiated the ceremonial, are cited in proof of the fact that it could have only a symbolic significance. Thus the ceremonial was subsumed by Barnabas under prophecy in the sense that by its symbolism it was supposed to inculcate prophetic morality. But the ceremonial was also regarded by Barnabas as prophetic in a more specific sense. It was not only a type of prophetic ethics; it was a type of the Messiah, though Barnabas used his typology not so much to prove the Messiahship of Jesus as for purposes of edification to the Christian believer. This absolute denial that the letter of the ceremonial ever had any validity might satisfy the devout, but it was too obviously untenable to be urged in debate. In Justin we meet with the first serious attempt outside the canonical writings to solve the problem.

In the Apology he adopts the same attitude of silence toward the ceremonial system which characterizes the other Apologists, but in the Dialogue with Trypho we have an extended discussion of the question. Here

again the great prophetic declarations against ceremonialism are cited, as in Barnabas, to justify its abrogation. But Justin will not deny that the ceremonial once existed according to God's will as an actual system of worship. He gives two explanations of its purpose. It was imposed upon the people because of their sins, for punitive or disciplinary purposes. Again it was given as a great Messianic type and assumes a specifically predictive function. "By enumerating all the appointments of Moses, I can demonstrate," says Justin, "that they are types and symbols and declarations of those things which would happen to Christ, of those men who, it was foreknown, would believe on him, and of those things which would be done by Christ himself." The view of the ceremonial, as a disciplinary and punitive apparatus, which emphasizes the letter, and the view of it as a prediction of Christ in symbol, which emphasizes the spirit, do not agree very well together, but Justin does not seem to be conscious of the inconsistency.

Thus in attempting to meet the difficulties raised by the Jew or the philosophic heathen or the intelligent Christian himself in connection with the ceremonial system, prophecy is introduced into the debate in two ways. It is either played off against the ceremonial system, in which case the prophets come into view as the great exponents of spiritual religion; or the ceremonial system is itself subsumed under prophecy, partly as teaching through symbols prophetic religion (Barnabas), partly as a great type of Christ (Barnabas, and especially Justin). In the latter case the ceremonial becomes a complicated apparatus of prediction.

The second difficulty for the philosophically trained Gentile which the Apologists set themselves to solve was

the recent origin of Christianity. Christianity claimed to be the absolute, the universal, religion. But how could it be so if it had appeared at so late a period in the history of the world? Is not philosophic truth universal, eternal? To those who, like the Apologists, sought to make Christianity intelligible to themselves and to others as a true philosophy, this recency of its origin was a constant stumbling block. The difficulty appears in an especially interesting form in Justin. Justin's main objection to the ceremonial was based on its disagreement with his ideas of a universal religion; it is impossible to think that God does not require the same thing of all men. But that God does not require the *ceremonial* is proved from the case of the Patriarchs who did not know the ceremonial law. Ceremonialism and universalism are incompatible. The same objection may be raised against the appearance of Christianity at so late a date in history. Justin has been speaking of human responsibility and goes on to say: "But lest some should . . . maintain that we say that Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago under Cyrenius and subsequently taught what we say he taught, and should cry out against us as though all men who were born before him were irresponsible — let us anticipate and solve the difficulty." In other words, Christianity as a religion for all mankind ought to be not only non-ceremonial, but universal in time, contemporaneous with the whole development of human history. But what was the solution of the difficulty which Justin proposed? Two answers are given, one a philosophical speculation, the other an historical and exegetical argument. In the same passage in which Justin raises the question just cited he introduces his Logos doctrine as an answer to

it. "We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God and . . . Logos, of whom every race of men were partakers, and those who lived with the Logos are Christians even though they have been thought to be atheists, as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus and men like them; and among the Barbarians, Abraham . . . and Elias." By this speculation Christianity was dated back to the beginning of human history. "Whatsoever things were rightly spoken among all men are the property of Christians."

Yet the Logos speculation by itself was scarcely adequate to solve the difficulty of the historical novelty of Christianity. It tended to unify preceding religious movements rather than to differentiate Christianity from other religions. What was needed was an historical proof that Christianity in its specific form was after all not recent but the oldest philosophy of all. This proof was furnished by the Old Testament construed as a Christian document. The interpretation of the Old Testament as a Christian document was not justified by the Apologists in connection with the argument from antiquity. The propriety of such an interpretation had been assumed from the beginning as a matter of course. The Old Testament had been the only Scriptures of Jesus and the Apostles and from them it had been handed down to the Church. But the Scriptures of the Christian Church must be Christian; that was a self-evident proposition. Thus Barnabas denies the opinion of some who hold that the covenant, i.e., the Old Testament religion construed in a Christian sense, belongs to both Jews and Christians. "It is ours, but they lost it utterly, though Moses once received it." Justin says to the Jew Trypho: "They [the writings of Moses and

David and Isaiah] are contained in your writings, or rather not yours but ours." The Christian character of the Old Testament being thus taken for granted, it remained only to point out its ancient date, and the antiquity of Christianity was proved. Hence we find elaborate chronological calculations among the Apologists to prove that the Old Testament, and more particularly Moses, was older than the Greek philosophers and poets or than "all the ancient heroes, wars and demons [gods]," as Tatian claimed.[1]

But it was not enough to show that Christianity as a philosophy could lay claim in its own documents to a vaster antiquity than any other philosophy. It was not age alone that gave it its preëminence. The distinctiveness and superiority of the Christian religion construed as a philosophy lie for the Apologists in the fact that it is a philosophy *based on revelation.* According to Justin philosophers only speculate; Prophets know. Prophets and philosophers may say similar things, but what the Prophets say they say as inspired men, and their sayings thus carry their own proof with them. Similarly Athenagoras draws the sharpest distinction between the teachings of the Prophets, upon whom the spirit of God played as upon a flute, and the teachings of the poets and philosophers. But what proved the inspiration of the Prophets? It is at this point that

[1] These calculations had also another object. The toleration which such a doctrine as the Logos speculation extended to the Greek philosophers might be misconstrued. It was necessary to insist on the uniqueness of the Old Testament and hence its immense antiquity was pointed out in order to show that the Greek thinkers had either borrowed or stolen their ideas from the Hebrew prophets, just as many apologists at the present time wish to show that Persian eschatology is borrowed from Judaism.

the argument from prophecy and, be it noted, from *prophecy construed as prediction,* is introduced. In proving the inspiration of the Prophets and hence the revealed character of Christianity the case was rested almost exclusively upon the argument from predictive prophecy. The argument from antiquity proved it to be a philosophy worthy to be compared with other philosophies; it provided Christianity with a pedigree. The argument from predictive prophecy demonstrated its uniqueness and its superiority to all other philosophies; the pedigree was noble. It is interesting to notice how very sharply the connection between the antiquity, inspiration and predictive function of the Prophets stands out in the writings of the Apologists. Thus, for example, Justin, in the account of his conversion, makes the Christian with whom he talked speak as follows: "There existed long before this time certain men more ancient than all those who were esteemed philosophers [antiquity] . . . who spoke by the divine spirit [inspiration] and foretold events which would take place and which are now taking place. They are called Prophets . . . and those events which have happened and those which are happening compel us to assent to the utterances made by them" [prediction, the proof of their inspiration and authority]. Tatian and Theophilus give the reasons that led to their conversion in almost exactly the same terms. Theophilus closes his statement with the confession: "Admitting, therefore, the proof which events happening as predicted afford, I do not disbelieve but believe." Christianity is not a recent philosophy; it is the most ancient of all philosophies. Better still, it is a philosophy based on revelation. Its teachers, the Prophets, are inspired, and the proof of

his is found in the fact that what they foretold came o pass. Thus the predictive element in prophecy enters nto the discussion of the ceremonial system; it enters even more vitally into the discussion of the antiquity of the Christian religion. But what are the things the Prophets foretold, the fulfilment of which would guarantee that they had spoken by the spirit of God? This question leads us to the third great problem mentioned above, the problem of the person of Christ.

The problem of the person of Christ is treated at length by Justin in his First Apology and in the Dialogue with Trypho. In both treatises it is the central problem around which the discussion revolves. "They proclaim our madness to consist in this that we give to a crucified man a place second to the unchangeable God, the creator of all." In both treatises the argument from prophecy, considered as prediction, offers the final justification of this madness. "But lest any one should meet us with the question: What should prevent that he whom we call Christ, being a man born of men, performed . . . his mighty works by magical arts and by this appeared to be Son of God? — we will now offer proof, not trusting mere assertions, but being of necessity persuaded by those who prophesied of him before these things came to pass, for with our own eyes we behold things that have happened and are happening just as they were predicted, and this we think will appear to you [the heathen readers of the Apology] the strongest and truest evidence." Thus Justin begins the proof of the divinity of Christ from prophecy ("the strongest and truest evidence") in the Apology, and he concludes the main section devoted to this argument as follows: 'Though we could bring forward many other prophe-

cies, we forbear, judging these sufficient for the persuasion of those who have ears to hear and understand, and considering also that those persons are able to see that we do not make assertions without being able to produce proof. . . . For with what reason should we believe of a crucified man that he is the first-born of the unbegotten God and himself will pass judgment on the whole human race unless we had found testimonies concerning him, published before he came, and unless we saw that things had happened accordingly?" The ramifications of the argument may best be observed in the Dialogue with Trypho. In discussing the person of Christ there were two main questions: Was Jesus the Messiah and was the Messiah of divine nature, or "only man born of men"? This last question was especially urgent since Christians claimed the right to worship him. The discussion of the divine nature of the Messiah resolved itself into the treatment of the following four propositions: (1) If the Messiah were divine, this implied his preëxistence, and there must accordingly be another person called God in addition to the Father and creator of all things. (2) If he were divine this implied an incarnation, in connection with which the miraculous birth was discussed. (3) If he were divine the problem of the passion becomes acute. (4) Lastly, if he were divine the Messiah could not finally perish in the passion, but must be exalted out of his estate of humiliation to a position of glory. It is under these rubrics and in this general order that the problem of the person of Christ is discussed in the Dialogue. In each case, except in the discussion of the preëxistence of Christ, where of course it could not be utilized, the proof from prophecy, construed as prediction, is the final and

conclusive evidence of Justin's contentions. All other arguments for the messiahship or divinity of Jesus are either ignored or completely subordinated to the argument from the fulfilment of prediction, and this is true in the Apology as well as in the Dialogue.[1]

In connection with the Virgin Birth and the Passion, for example, the proof from prophecy is pressed to the most astonishing extent. There is scarcely any attempt to defend these cardinal doctrines of the Christian tradition on intrinsic or theological grounds. A few times Justin seeks to give a theological motive for the Virgin Birth, as when he says that Christ became man by the Virgin in order that the disobedience which proceeded from the serpent might receive its destruction in the same manner in which it derived its origin. In other

[1] It is true that Justin at one point in the Apology sketches out a more varied system of Christian evidences, when he speaks of Jesus as one "who by his works [miracles], by the mighty deeds wrought in his name [exorcism], by the words he taught, by the prophecies announced concerning him, is the true, blameless and in all things irreproachable Christ." But of these arguments only exorcism and the proof from prophecy are relied upon. The argument from miracles cannot be utilized with any confidence, for Justin himself admits that miracles may be attributed to demons, and hence he refers to the proof from miracles only incidentally. Justin gives extended illustrations of the moral teachings of Jesus (principally out of the Sermon on the Mount), but these are cited against the charge of immorality which was brought against Christians and not to prove the divinity of Jesus. As a matter of fact they are consciously introduced as a digression before the proof that Jesus can be properly worshiped is taken up. (Cf. Chap. 14 with 13 and 22.) In the Apology Justin also introduces mythological analogies, more especially to the Virgin Birth and the Crucifixion, but they are not so much intended to justify these peculiarly difficult facts as to furnish an *ad hominem* argument against the objections to them urged by his Gentile readers, and when Trypho in the Dialogue seeks to discredit the Christian doctrines by adducing these same analogies, Justin is on the defensive against them.

words, the Virgin Mary is the antithesis of Eve, who, as virgin, "conceived the word of the serpent and brought forth death." But apart from this hint of the so-called recapitulation theory, afterwards elaborated by Irenæus, this article of the creed is regarded only in the light of a sign in connection with the fulfilment of prediction. To Trypho's objection that the Virgin Birth is an incredible and wellnigh impossible thing, Justin retorts that it is God's will, and, cut off as he is from adducing heathen analogies to prove its possibility, he cites Old Testament analogies, e.g., the various forms in which Christ appeared in the Old Testament, and, more pertinently, the cases of Sarah and Hannah, whom God enabled to bear, though barren, and of Eve, whom God made out of the rib of Adam. But the real point at issue was whether God *willed* such a birth. Here Justin falls back on prophecy. After rebuking Trypho for supposing that it is impossible for God to do anything that he wills, he continues: "And especially when it is *predicted* this would take place, do not venture to pervert or misinterpret the prophecies." In other words, the Virgin Birth is due to the will of God and therefore it is possible. But that it is due to his will is proved by the correspondence between prediction and fulfilment. From this point of view the Virgin Birth as a fulfilment is considered only as a sign. "But that which is truly a sign and which was to be made trustworthy to mankind [namely, the Virgin Birth], this He anticipated by the spirit of prophecy and predicted it as I have repeated to you . . . in order that when the event takes place it may be known as the operation of the power and will of the Maker of all things." In the same way the theological significance of the Passion is

as completely subordinated to its prophetic significance as a sign as in the case of the Virgin Birth. At the outset of the formal discussion of Christ's Passion in the Dialogue Justin answers Trypho's objection to the idea of a crucified Messiah as follows: "If Christ was not to suffer and the prophets had not foretold that he would be led to death on account of the sins of the people . . . then you would have good cause to wonder. But if these [traits in the Messianic picture of Is. 53 to which Justin had just alluded] are to be considered characteristic of him and to mark him out to all, how is it possible for us to do anything else than believe confidently in him? And will not as many as have understood the writings of the Prophets, whenever they hear merely that he is crucified, say that this is he and no other?" The details of Is. 53 and Ps. 22, which are interpreted verse by verse as specific instances of humiliation in Jesus' life, are considered only as signs. The religious significance of these passages is nowhere discussed, only their predictive significance. Thus the reference to the pierced hands and feet at Ps. 22: 16–18 is a sign that the psalm refers to Christ, as no one among the Jews "who has been called king or Christ has ever had his hands or feet pierced while alive or has died in this mysterious fashion, namely by the cross, save this Jesus alone." Justin, it is true, does refer not infrequently to Jesus' death on the cross as efficacious in the redemption of the world. But this is hardly more than a repetition of a traditional formula. He contents himself with the simple assertion of this fact; he does not expound or utilize it in argument. For example, in discussing Dt. 21: 23, which Trypho urged with special insistence against the idea of a crucified

Messiah, Justin does, indeed, say that "the Father of all wished his Christ . . . to take upon himself the curse of all." But this statement, which seems to do justice to the religious significance of the crucifixion, is largely neutralized by what immediately follows: "For the saying in the Law (Dt. 21:23) confirms our hope, which depends on the crucified Christ, not because he who is crucified is cursed of God, but because God foretold that which would be done by you all [the Jews' treatment of Jesus] . . . and you see clearly that this has come to pass." Thus the religious significance of the cross is again lost. In that *sign* Justin conquers.

In the treatment of the exaltation of Christ, that is, his resurrection, ascension and second coming, the view of these events as fulfilments of prediction again predominates. They satisfied those prophecies in the Old Testament which foretold a glorified Messiah.[1] In connection with the second coming, however, a difficulty was encountered. There were many prophecies in the Old Testament which seemed to prophesy a kingly and reigning Christ, and a glorified Jerusalem as the seat of his rule. These prophecies very obviously had not been fulfilled as yet. Hence Justin distinguishes between two advents, the first advent in humiliation and the second advent when Christ comes in glory. But what reason was there for a belief in the prophecies which concerned the second advent? In the Apology Justin makes a weighty statement upon this point and one which, as we shall see, is fundamental to the sub-

[1] Yet at this point it is only fair to say that Justin shows at times an interest in Christ's exaltation apart from its relationship to prophecy. It is the exalted Christ who redeems from the power of demons and, as judge, distributes rewards and punishments.

ject of the present essay. "Since, then, we prove that all things which have already happened had been predicted by the Prophets before they came to pass, we must necessarily believe also that those things which are in like manner predicted but are yet to come to pass, shall certainly come to pass. For as the things which have already taken place come to pass when foretold even though they are unknown, so shall the things which remain, even though they be unknown and disbelieved, also come to pass." He then goes on to apply this principle to the two advents. Thus the fulfilment of the predictions concerning the first advent is made the guaranty of the fulfilment of the predictions concerning the second advent. In other words, *faith in the second advent is indissolubly connected with the predictive theory of prophecy.* We shall have occasion to return to this subject in the sequel. It may be noticed in passing that Justin is a representative of the Millenarian movement in the Early Church. He confesses his belief in a very literalistic interpretation of those prophecies which he refers to the second advent, though he freely admits that there are good Christian men who do not share his views on this point.

If we review what has thus far been said it is clear that in Justin and the Apologists the independent significance of Jesus' work on earth is largely ignored. The details of his incarnate life are of interest only as they furnish the necessary complements to the predictions of the Old Testament and thus round out the proof from prophecy. The predictions alone would be valueless without the fulfilments; the events of Christ's life are apparently of little value except as fulfilments. The general effect of the argument from prophecy as con-

ducted by the Apologists was to merge Christianity into the prophetic religion of the Old Testament. The supreme interest of these champions of Christianity was in monotheism and morals. But in these two particulars the prophetic religion of the Old Testament did not differ in essence from Christianity. It could not do so. God is always the same and his moral requirements are always the same. Hence prophetic religion could differ from Christianity only in form. There were in reality three stages in the development of the true religion: (a) the Mosaic Law, in which the eternal moral obligations were combined for various purposes with temporary moral requirements; (b) prophecy, in which only the eternal requirements of repentance and holy living were enjoined; and (c) Christianity, in which these requirements are expressed more simply, clearly and completely. Jesus is accordingly primarily the Teacher, the new Lawgiver, and Christianity is the New Law. With this view agrees the Logos doctrine so characteristic of the Greek Apologists in which Christ appears primarily as Revealer. Thus the religious content of Christianity and the Prophetic religion are practically the same. At this point the argument from prophecy enters in and cancels the independent value of the life of Christ. Instead of completing the work of Paul and differentiating Christianity from the Old Testament after the Church had been differentiated from the Synagogue, the Apologists construed Christianity as prophecy. "Prophecy after the death of Moses is everlasting," says Justin. Even Moses himself, after the elimination of the ceremonial, appears as a prophet. The convincing proof that the really distinctive characteristics of Christianity were largely lost sight

of by the Apologists is the fact that in their writings the New Testament is completely subordinated to the Old Testament. The latter is the real canon of these writers. From it the second article of the creed as well as the first is justified. Two qualifications, however, should be made to what has just been said. The Apologists found an independent and redemptive significance in Christ's power over the demons; but this did not materially aid them to any clear apprehension of the difference between the New Testament and the Old Testament. Again it must be remembered that in the works of the Apologists we are dealing with a peculiar class of writings having a peculiar audience in view, and we must be slow to draw from these apologetic writings conclusions as to the personal belief of their authors or to deny that they may have had a richer and deeper Christian experience than is recorded in their works that have come down to us. Yet, as has been pointed out by others, it is not the personal experience of the Apologists that has influenced the history of doctrine but their scientific defenses of Christianity, and in these, when all allowance has been made, there is manifested an "inability to discover a specific significance for the person of Christ within the sphere of revelation." But was this to be the final interpretation of Christianity? Was it justifiable thus to read back the Gospel into the Old Testament, or, rather, to construe the Gospel by the Old Testament? The Church, as we have seen, had differentiated itself from Judaism, but had retained the Scriptures of Judaism. Was this not after all an untenable position? Logically, should not as sharp a distinction be drawn between the Gospel and the Old Testament as between the Church and the

Synagogue? These were the questions raised by the Gnostics and Marcion. "The separation between the Law and Gospel is the proper and principal work of Marcion," is the bitter comment of Tertullian. In meeting the attack of the Gnostics and Marcion the proof from prophecy construed as prediction again enters into the debate in a most vital way.

III

The supreme interest of the Gnostics was in the problem of redemption, and it was therefore the redemptive element in Christianity which appealed to them most strongly. In Jesus Christ they saw the Savior. As such he was unique, and Christianity as the religion of redemption was unique. In accordance with this view it is not surprising to find the writings of the New Testament now pushed to the front and given an independent significance in theology. Just how far the Gnostics may have anticipated the Catholic Church in the formation of the New Testament canon may be an open question, but it is practically certain that they were the first to use the Scriptures of the New Testament for apologetic as distinguished from didactic purposes. From them come the first commentaries on the New Testament, in which they sought to expound their peculiar theories and give to them a Christian coloring. They also laid great emphasis upon apostolicity in doctrine, especially upon the secret apostolic tradition which they claimed to possess and by which they sought to justify their interpretations of the New Testament. But in proportion as the New Testament came to the front as the foundation of Christianity, the religion of redemption,

the Old Testament, fell into the background and became subject to criticism. In all these particulars the Gnostics stand in the sharpest contrast with the Greek Apologists. Nothing can be more illuminating than the difference in the way in which Justin, for example, criticizes the ceremonial law in the *Dialogue with Trypho* and in which Ptolemæus treats the law generally in his *Epistle to Flora* (both writings dating from about the same time). Justin subjects only the ceremonial law to criticism, bases his strictures upon his philosophical conceptions of God and of ethics, and defends them by appealing to the case of the Patriarchs, who were righteous without the ceremonial, and to the Prophets, who preached against it. Ptolemæus criticizes the entire law on the basis of the teachings of Christ and the Apostles. Only once is a passage from a prophet quoted. In other words, Justin uses the Old Testament to prove his points and Ptolemæus uses the New Testament. Thus the burning question between the orthodox Fathers and the Gnostics was what attitude should be adopted toward the Old Testament. In the discussion of this question the argument from prophecy occupied a foremost place. Just how this came about must now be noticed.

The elements in Gnosticism directly bearing upon our argument are as follows. The Gnostics had a *dualistic conception* of the universe. For them matter was originally and inherently evil. The problem of the creation of the world thus became the great speculative problem in their theosophical systems. The infinite God could not come into defiling contact with organically evil matter in order to create the world any more than he could have originally created evil matter itself. How, then, is the transition from the infinite being to evil matter

to be effected and the possibility of a creation secured? This problem was solved by the doctrine of emanations. By a process of self-limitation through a succession of emanations, the Divine Essence could eventually become so attenuated that the last emanation of the series was so imperfectly divine that it could come into contact with and work creatively upon matter without too violent a shock to its divinity. This last emanation, or æon, is the Demiurge, or world-builder; a being which, under varying forms, is common to all the Gnostic systems. These systems have been classified from various points of view, but for our purposes they may be differentiated among themselves by their different conceptions of the character of the Demiurge. There was a radical and a temperate view of him. The more moderate Gnostic schools, like the Valentinians, conceived of the Demiurge as representing the Supreme Being in the work of creation. The Demiurge carried out the will of the Supreme Being, but he did so largely unconsciously. He therefore could not grasp the final purpose of the creation which he had formed. Hence arose its many imperfections. On the other hand, in the process of emanation, the last link in the succession might be regarded as so far removed from its original source as to become practically independent of it, and, taking one step more, some of the Ophite sects came to regard the Demiurge as directly antagonistic to the Supreme Being.

Finally, Jesus, in all these systems, is the highest æon, the direct revelation of the Supreme Being, and is hence distinguished from the preceding emanations, particularly from the Demiurge. At this point the religious and soteriological interest is introduced into the cosmological speculations. Christ came to reveal what the

final purpose of God is in creation, of which the Demiurge had but a dim and imperfect conception, and to save men from the painful limitations of a world formed by one either so ignorant of the will of the Supreme Being or so hostile to it as the Demiurge was supposed to be. "Christianity," as another has remarked, "the highest revelation of the true God, appeared [to the Gnostics] as the true revelation of the highest God."

The bearing of these theories upon our discussion will now become clear. The Demiurge, or the Creator of the World, is identified by the Gnostics with the God revealed in the Old Testament, on account of the first chapter in Genesis. The Old Testament belongs to him, therefore it partakes of his character. Thus the dualism of the Gnostics is transferred from the world to revelation, from cosmology to Scripture. The Old Testament, like the world, is full of imperfections. The more radical Gnostics had a keen eye for all that appeared to them unworthy of God in the Old Testament, his vindictiveness and passionate nature, the cruel severity and senselessness and inconsistency of his laws. This criticism was carried to such a pitch that men who opposed the favorites of the Demiurge were praised. Esau and the Sodomites now became canonized and even Cain received a halo! There is thus created an antithesis, varying in sharpness in proportion to the different conceptions of the Demiurge, between the Old Testament, the book of the Demiurge, and the Gospel, or revelation of the highest æon, Christ. The Old Testament is no longer regarded as a Christian book. It belongs, not to the Christians, but to the Jews — the people of the Demiurge. In this way the view of the Old Testament, entertained by the Primitive Church and defended by the Apologists,

was flatly rejected and the unity of the two Testaments broken down. But prophecy, both as spiritual religion and especially as prediction, is that which seems to bind the two Testaments most firmly together. Accordingly, the Gnostics, in the degree in which they rejected the Old Testament revelation, rejected its prophecies also. The highest æon, Christ, is not the fulfiller of Old Testament prophecies, or at least is so only to a limited extent. This view is given its most rigorous expression by Marcion.

Marcion, indeed, cannot be strictly regarded as a Gnostic. He ignored the speculative and cosmological side of Gnosticism and emphasized only its religious and redemptive side. To him the redemption in Christ was so marvelous that it became historically inexplicable. It must be something entirely *de novo*. It had nothing to do with Judaism or with the Scriptures of Judaism. "Marcion's special and principal work is the separation of the Law and the Gospel," Tertullian complains, and again he says: "He is the author of the breach of peace between the two and consequently of the twofold document that contains them." At this point Marcion borrows the idea of the Demiurge from the Gnostics. The Jews were the peculiar people of the Demiurge; the Old Testament was his peculiar book and the Messiah of the Old Testament belonged to him and had nothing to do with the Christ of the New Testament. Unable to gain the supremacy over the world for his own people, the Jews, this "Jew-god" promised them in the Old Testament a Messiah who would achieve this victory for them. The Messiah of the Old Testament was a being corresponding more to the ordinary contemporary Jewish conception of the Messiah, and totally unlike the

spiritual æon and true Messiah of the New Testament. At this point Marcionite and Jew are found fighting shoulder to shoulder against the orthodox Church, though from quite different premises. Both held essentially the same view of the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. But the Jew denied that Jesus was the Messiah of the Old Testament because the Jew rejected the New Testament; Marcion denied the identification because he rejected the Old Testament.

It is obvious that in the debate with the Gnostics and the Marcionites the argument from prophecy must occupy an extremely important place. As a matter of fact this argument, in the form of it elaborated by the Apologists, was taken over bodily into the writings of the Old-Catholic Fathers, Irenæus and Tertullian, and turned against the heretics. The great thesis of Irenæus's work, *Against Heresies,* which is repeated again and again, is, "We have not been taught another God besides the Father and Maker of all things [namely the God of the Old Testament] . . . nor another Christ . . . besides him who was foretold by the Prophets," and Books III and IV are devoted to the scriptural proof of this thesis. Through them the argument from prophecy runs like a warp. For example, in IV, 10, 11, the unity of the two Testaments is established and the identity of the God of both covenants vindicated by the fact that what the God of the Old Testament foretold by the Prophets the Christ of the New Testament fulfilled. In IV, 33–36 a classical formulation of the argument from prophecy is found. In these chapters the unity of prophecy and its organic connection with Christ are set forth under the figure of the body and its members. The Prophets are members of Christ; as each

member has its own special function, so each prophet has his own special view of Christ. But as the body is complete only in all its members, so the picture of Christ is complete only when all the various prophecies are combined together in one whole. Then follows a long series of predictions of the facts of Christ's life, including the Virgin Birth and the details of the Passion. On the basis of such passages Irenæus urges Marcion and men like him who maintain that the Prophets belonged to another God to read the Gospel carefully and then the Prophets, and "they will find that the whole conduct and all the doctrine and all the suffering of our Lord were predicted by them. But whence could the Prophets have derived the power to predict . . . all things which were done by Christ . . . if they had received inspiration from another God?" These various coincidences, it is argued, could not have happened simply by chance. "The points connected with the Passion of the Lord which were foretold, were realized in no other case." The same thesis is next maintained against the Valentinian position that the Prophets belonged to the Demiurge and hence falsehood and truth were blended in their prophecies.

In Tertullian's work, *Against Marcion,* the argument from prophecy stands out even more sharply defined, if anything, than in Irenæus. Book III expressly, and Book IV very largely, are devoted to the elaboration of this argument, which is summed up in the statement that "Christ will be the Christ of the Prophets whenever he is found to be in accord with the Prophets." Book III leads off with a demonstration of the absurdity, even, of an unpredicted Christ. "Suddenly a son, suddenly sent and suddenly Christ!" Tertullian exclaims, "On

the contrary, I should suppose that nothing comes suddenly from God because there is nothing which is not ordered and arranged by God; and, if ordered, why not foretold, that it may be proved to have been ordered by the prediction." After the absurdity of an unpredicted Christ is demonstrated (chaps. 1–4) and some remarks made on the principles of prophetic interpretation (chap. 5), Marcion is forced by Tertullian to side with the Jews because of his denial that the Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus (chap. 6, 7). In chaps. 8–11 there is an argument against Marcion's docetism which leads on to an elaborate exposition of the Virgin Birth, prophesied in Is. 7: 14, in order to prove a real incarnation (chaps. 12–14). Finally in chaps. 18–25 a great mass of heterogeneous predictions is cited in proof of his main thesis. The argument is really carried over into Book IV which closes with the following triumphant claim: "And now, as I venture to believe, we have accomplished our undertaking. We have set forth Jesus Christ as none other than the Christ of the Creator [the Demiurge]. Our proofs have been drawn from his doctrines, maxims, affections, feelings, miracles, sufferings and even resurrection, as foretold by the Prophets . . . Marcion, I pity you. Your labor has been in vain. For the Jesus who appears in your gospel is mine." No statement could better illustrate the absolute confidence which the Fathers placed in the argument from prophecy, construed as prediction.

In one respect the argument was given, incidentally, an even wider range in the anti-Gnostic writers than in the Apologists. In the works of the latter the moral difficulties of the Old Testament had been scarcely touched. But the Gnostics and Marcion had directed

attention to them. In opposition to their criticisms the Fathers were compelled to adopt the same attitude toward the moral difficulties which the Apologists had adopted toward the ceremonial and subsume them at times under Messianic types. In the treatment of such difficulties Irenæus claims that he had received two canons of interpretation from an ancient presbyter. (1) "With respect to those misdeeds for which the Scriptures themselves blame the Patriarchs and Prophets, we are not to inveigh against them nor become like Ham who ridiculed the shame of his father; but we should give thanks to God . . . inasmuch as their sins have been forgiven them through the advent of our Lord. (2) With respect to those actions on which the Scriptures pass no censure, we ought not to become accusers, for we are not more exact than God; *but we should search for a type.* For not one of those things which have been set down in Scripture without being condemned is without significance." As an example Irenæus gives the incest of Lot's daughters. The details are so offensive to our modern taste that they need not be repeated here, though it is only fair to say that those who apply the physical allusions in the Song of Songs to Christ and his bride the Church need not be shocked by the ancient Father's treatment of the deed of Lot's daughters.

But while the argument from prophecy in the Old-Catholic Fathers is of the utmost importance, there is nevertheless a subtle change of emphasis in these writers as compared with the Apologists, occasioned by the Gnostic mode of attack which had to be countered. The argument from prophecy does not occupy the exclusive position which it had previously occupied. This is seen in the following particulars: the new and more his-

torical estimate of the ceremonial; the independent significance of the New Testament as compared with the Old Testament, and the independent significance assigned to the circumstances of Christ's life and of his teachings. The shift of emphasis as seen in these three facts is of fundamental importance. It means the ultimate withering away of the argument from prophecy.

In Irenæus we meet for the first time with an honest attempt to do justice to the letter of the Law. This he was enabled to do in connection with his most distinctive contribution to Christian theology, his recapitulation theory and his doctrine of "the economies." According to the Gnostics, the act of creation and the act of redemption are disparate. They are the acts of different gods. According to Irenæus, creation and redemption correspond. Redemption is the recapitulation or restoration of the original order and harmony of the universe. Christ, who effects this, is the second Adam. The interval between the first and second Adam is a history of salvation marked off in definite economies or covenants, and culminating in Christ. There are four of these covenants; the Adamic, the Noahic, the Mosaic and the Evangelic covenant, which last "recapitulates all things in itself, bearing men upon its wings into the heavenly kingdom." Redemption is thus not sudden and catastrophic, as on the Gnostic view, but the result of an ordered development. "By means of the successive covenants men are gradually to attain to perfect salvation, for there is one salvation and one God [note the anti-Gnostic aim of the statement], but the precepts which form man are various and the steps which lead man to God are not a few." In the framework of this scheme room is found for the ideas of accommodation and peda-

gogy, various means being employed in the various stages of man's progress, and so Irenæus arrives at a fairly historical valuation of the Law. The Law belongs to a definite covenant, the Mosaic, and is adapted to the particular needs of that covenant. As contrasted with the treatment of the Law by Barnabas and Justin, its treatment by Irenæus marks a great advance. The letter of the Law now begins to come to its own. *But it is clear that in proportion as the Law can be historically justified as letter, it is no longer so urgently necessary to interpret it as a great apparatus of Messianic symbolism.* When it can be assigned an historical function in the economy of redemption the obligation to interpret it Messianically is not so burdensome. Yet it must not be imagined that Irenæus did not entertain the typical and Messianic view of the Law. The Law in its pedagogical aspect calls the people "to the things of primary importance by means of those which are secondary, that is, to things which are real by means of those which are typical, and by things temporal to the eternal, and by the carnal to the spiritual, and by the earthly to the heavenly . . . for by means of types they learned to fear God." That the typical includes distinctively Messianic types is clear from the proof passage cited in this connection (1 Cor. 10: 11) and from the great generalizing statement which immediately follows and which may be taken as the summary of Irenæus's view of the Law: "They [the Jews] had, therefore, a law, a course of discipline and a prophecy of future things." The letter has gained a new recognition in Irenæus, but the consequences of this had not worked themselves out nor were they to do so for many ages afterward. The prophetic view of the Law and the historical view of the Law were to remain

for many centuries side by side unconscious of their real incompatibility.

Of more immediate importance in its effect upon the argument from prophecy is the increasing significance that now begins to attach to the New Testament. This is illustrated by the way in which the argument is introduced by Irenæus and Tertullian as compared with the way in which it was introduced by the Apologists. The latter started with the Old Testament and worked forward to the New Testament. The anti-heretical writers started with the New Testament and worked back to the Old Testament. This change was due, of course, to the controversies with the heretics. They accepted the New Testament but rejected the Old Testament. The latter was the thing to be proved. Thus Irenæus and Tertullian make a special point of arguing only from those documents which were accepted by their opponents. Irenæus urges Marcion first to read the Gospels and then the Prophets and mark the correspondences. The Apologists would have reversed this process. Even more significant is the statement of Tertullian. After claiming that he had proved Christ to be the Christ of the Prophets he says: "And the result of this agreement between the facts of his career and the Scriptures of the Creator [the Old Testament] should be the restoration of belief *in them.*" Now the result of adopting the New Testament as the starting-point in the debate with the heretics is that the argument for the unity of the two Testaments, the point at issue, was widened out far beyond the proof from prophecy strictly defined. The correspondence between prediction and fulfilment is only one among many correspondences between them, between the Messiah and Jesus, between the Demiurge and the

Redeemer. "Christ must be pronounced to belong to the Creator if he has administered his dispensations, fulfilled his prophecies, promoted his laws, given reality to his promises, revived his mighty power, remolded his decrees, expressed his attributes, his properties." This program of Tertullian includes much more than the correspondence between prediction and fulfilment, and, in spite of the fact that at the end of his argument he seems to lump everything under this one rubric, as a matter of fact he adheres most faithfully to his program. In this Tertullian is only following in the steps of Irenæus. Thus the great section on the Law in Irenæus (IV. 12–19) is devoted to proving that the Law and the Gospel are not in antithesis, as the Gnostics claimed, but are in correspondence. Christ must be the Christ of the Demiurge as he borrows his law of love from the Mosaic law. If the Gnostics or Marcion point to the judicial severity of the God of the Old Testament, Irenæus can point to the terrible woes pronounced by Christ upon his opponents. If the Demiurge hardened Pharaoh's heart, Jesus spake in parables, that, seeing, they might not understand, etc. The pages of Irenæus and Tertullian are swimming with all sorts of alleged correspondences between the two Testaments other than the correspondence between prophecy and fulfilment. Some of these are profound, some superficial, some positively grotesque, but even in the latter instances the real significance of this wider argument is very great. The New Testament is no longer reduced to the function of furnishing signs that the prophecies have been fulfilled. There is, in the present instance, a real, even if at times a naïve, attempt to connect the two Testaments historically and morally. The proof from prophecy, instead of being the sole link

which unites the two covenants, is now but one strand, though a very important one, in the cord that binds them together.

Immediately connected with the adoption of the New Testament as a working basis of apologetics against the heretics and the consequent inclusion into the argument of a much more extensive exegetical material than could be resumed under the category of prediction and fulfilment, is the new dogmatic significance attached to the facts of Christ's life and to his teachings. The heretics were forcing the Christian Church to analyze its Christian consciousness and to define the specific content of the religion of the New Testament more sharply. We saw how, in the argument of the Apologists, Christianity tended to become merged into prophecy and how the facts of Christ's life were of value chiefly because it was possible by means of them to round out the proof from prophecy. But in the debate with the Gnostics Christ's life and teaching begin to assume an independent value. In other words Christian dogma begins to develop with great rapidity. To illustrate this fully would require us to broaden out the present treatise into a general history of dogma. For our immediate purpose two illustrations must suffice. We saw that the Virgin Birth and the details of the Passion were used by Justin practically only to supplement such prophecies as Is. 7: 14 or Is. 53 and Ps. 22. But now these facts gain a dogmatic significance of their own. They are worked into a great philosophy of the incarnation which is especially developed by Irenæus in connection with his recapitulation theory. Against the docetism of the Gnostics and Marcion on the one hand and the naturalism of the Ebionites on the other, Irenæus definitely sets himself

to answer the great question of Christian theology: *Cur deus homo?* He answers the question as follows: "Unless man had overcome the enemy of man, the enemy would not have been legitimately overcome; and again unless it had been God who had freely given salvation, we could never have possessed it securely. . . . It was incumbent upon the Mediator between God and man, by his relationship to both, to bring both to friendship and concord." On this view it is absolutely necessary that the incarnation be a real one and the Virgin Birth and the Passion were considered to be the two most serviceable facts to establish its reality. The Virgin Birth in its turn was connected by a mystical analogy with the recapitulation theory. "As Adam had his substance from untilled and as yet virgin soil (Gen. 2:5!) and was formed by the hand of God . . . so did the Word, recapitulating Adam in himself, rightly receive a birth, which enabled him to gather up Adam from Mary who was as yet a Virgin." In other words the Virgin Birth stands for two things: an actual birth, and therefore an actual connection of Christ with the human race, Adam being "gathered up through Mary"; and a divine origin, God being the father of Jesus as he was of Adam; that is, the Virgin Birth stands for a real incarnation. The desire to emphasize the reality of the incarnation in a dogmatic interest is also seen very crassly exhibited in Tertullian, who urges on the one hand all the offensive details of parturition and early infancy in his eagerness to defend the reality of the birth against Marcion's docetism, and on the other hand argues for a kind of arithmetical necessity of a Virgin Birth if Christ, as Marcion holds, is to be really divine. We may think as little as we please of the kind of arguments used by these

Fathers, but at least they show how these men were getting beyond, even though unconsciously, the *sign theory* of the Virgin Birth. In the same way the details of the Passion are utilized against the docetism of the heretics. "He suffered nothing," says Tertullian, "who did not truly suffer," and the details of the Passion were adduced, of course, to prove that he truly suffered.

In the foregoing I have sought to show how, through a more historical view of the Law, through an increasing recognition of the independent value of the New Testament as compared with the Old Testament and through a more developed theory of the inherent dogmatic importance of the facts of Christ's life, the proof from prophecy would naturally tend to become relatively less important than in the writings of the Apologists. In part it is rendered superfluous (in connection with the new view of the Law), in part it is supplemented by a great many other exegetical arguments to prove the unity of the two Testaments, in part it becomes unnecessary as the facts of Christ's life take on a value independent of the fact that they had been foretold. Nevertheless the anti-Gnostic writers themselves can hardly be said to have realized this change of emphasis. The proof from prophecy is still their chief reliance, and the sign-theory of Jesus' life, as confirming prophecy, is innocently retained side by side with the growing recognition of its intrinsic significance. Thus when Irenæus holds that all Philip had to do in order to convince the Ethiopian eunuch was to read to him the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, or when he avers that the Apostles to the Jews had an easier time than the Apostles to the Gentiles because "they were assisted by the Scriptures which the Lord fulfilled in coming as he had been announced," he

evidently implies a sign-theory of prophecy. This is also seen in the difficulty in differentiating the Old Testament from the New Testament which he himself feels arises out of this theory of prophecy. After urging Marcion to compare the two and observe how prophecy and fulfilment correspond and how all the conduct, doctrines and sufferings of the Lord were predicted, he raises the question which he supposes Marcion might ask: "What, then, did the Lord bring by his advent?"

Tertullian's conduct of the argument from prophecy implies the sign-theory in its most exaggerated form. Nothing comes from God unordered or unarranged. "But if ordered, why not also foretold, that it may be proved to have been ordered by the prediction." Ps. 22 is treated in precisely the same way as Justin treated it — "It contains the entire passion of Christ" — and in IV. 40–43 the sign-theory and the intrinsic significance of the details of the Passion are inextricably interwoven.

It will be readily seen from the discussion thus far that the argument from prophecy was one of the most important factors, perhaps it would be safe to say the *most* important single factor, in the apologetics of the first two centuries. It was necessarily the burning question between Jew and Christian whenever they came into any real debate with one another. It was the cornerstone in the system of the Greek Apologists. It played a fundamental part in what was one of the most critical struggles in the history of the Church, the struggle with the Gnostic and Marcionite heresies. These heretics attempted for the first time something like an historical criticism of the Old Testament, though, it is true, they did this from a religious rather than from an historical interest. All honor to them for it! They pointed out

in particular certain features of Messianic prophecy which, though long denied, have been finally recognized by a scientific exegesis. But their criticism was carried on in the interest of theories fatal to the life of the Church. If they had succeeded in inducing the Church to reject the Law and the Prophets, they would have removed the foundation upon which Jesus himself claimed to build (Marcion significantly deleted Mt. 5 : 17, a passage often cited against him) and would have smoothed the way for a complete Hellenization of Christianity. Hence the apologetic importance for the Early Church of the argument from prophecy cannot be too strongly emphasized. It saved the Old Testament to the Christian religion in the only way in which, at that time, it could be saved. But by saving the Old Testament it preserved the organic connection of Christianity with the previous history of revelation and prevented it from becoming evaporated into theosophical speculations or distorted into a one-sided, because unhistorical, development. It can be readily understood that an argument which played such a fundamental part in the formative period of the Christian Church would leave an indelible impression upon subsequent theological thought. Early impressions are apt to be lasting.

CHAPTER II

THE PREDOMINANCE OF THE PREDICTIVE ELEMENT IN THE PATRISTIC ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY

HAVING shown the extent and importance of the argument from prophecy in the Patristic Period, it is next in order to point out the peculiar nature of the argument. This has already been incidentally done to a considerable extent, but for the sake of the logical development of the discussion and in order to study this peculiarity in its proper perspective some repetition and amplification at the present point may be pardoned.

I

As we have seen, the whole emphasis was laid upon the predictive element in prophecy and upon the minute *ad litteram* correspondence between prophecy and fulfilment. "This is the work of God," says Justin, "to tell of a thing before it happens and to show it as happening as it was foretold." The Prophets, it is true, were also looked upon as teachers of morals and monotheism (e.g. Barnabas, Justin and the Apologists generally, especially in their discussions of the ceremonial), but the function of teaching is completely subordinated by these writers to the function of foretelling. It is to the marvel of prediction that Justin, Tatian and Theophilus ascribe their conversion. When it becomes neces-

sary formally to define prophecy or a prophet, it is the predictive function which is primarily included in the definition. "There were among the Jews," Justin explains in his *Apology,* "certain men who were Prophets of God, through whom the prophetic spirit published beforehand things that were to come to pass." When Irenæus wishes to describe the nature of prophecy he says, "Prophecy is a prediction of things future, that is, a setting forth beforehand of those things which shall be hereafter." The sign-theory of prophecy, which has been found to be so striking a characteristic of the patristic view of prophecy, implies, necessarily, the same exclusive emphasis upon prediction and fulfilment. "That which was truly a sign," says Justin, in connection with his use of the Virgin Birth, "this he anticipated by the spirit of prophecy and predicted, in order that when the event should take place it might be known as the operation of the power and will of the Maker of all things." Again he says, "It was not his entrance into Jerusalem sitting on an ass, which we have shown was prophesied, that empowered him to be Christ, *but it furnished men with the proof* that he was Christ . . . and as this was done by him in the precise manner in which it was prophesied [Gen. 49:10, Zech. 9:9] that it would be done by Christ and as the fulfilment was recognized, it became a clear proof that he was the Christ." When Irenæus urges Marcion to compare the Gospels with the Prophets and to observe how minutely they correspond, or when Tertullian contends that all things are ordered by God, "and if ordered, why not foretold, that it may be proved to have been ordered by the prediction," the same sign-theory of prophecy and consequent emphasis upon prediction are typically illustrated. It is a logi-

cal consequence of such a theory when the Fathers at times hold that the more impossible a thing predicted is, the greater is the evidential value of its fulfilment. This consideration is especially urged in connection with the Virgin Birth. Thus Justin says: "For things which were incredible, these God predicted by the prophetic spirit as about to come to pass, in order that when they came to pass there might be no unbelief but faith, because of the prediction." Similarly Tertullian: "Now a sign from God would not have been a sign unless it had been some novel and prodigious thing." In such statements a wholly magical view of prophecy is involved.

Tertullian drives the sign-theory of predictive prophecy so far that at times he arrives at a practically fatalistic view of it. Thus, in a comment upon Amos 2:6 as a prophecy of Judas's betrayal of Jesus for a price (!), he naïvely remarks: "It might have been well enough for another Christ to be betrayed without price, but it would not have been suitable in the case of one who was fulfilling prophecies." Again, in explaining the statement that the Son of Man must be delivered up, he says: "*Must* be delivered up and why '*must be*,' except it was written by God the Creator" [i.e. in the Old Testament] . . . "Were the words 'with desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer' spoken because he was fond of Jewish lamb and not rather because he was led like a lamb to the slaughter and wished to accomplish the symbol? . . . He might have been betrayed by any stranger did not I find that here, too, he fulfilled a psalm (Ps. 41:9)." Such incautious statements must have been frequent in the Early Church, for Justin feels it incumbent upon him to defend the argument from prophecy against the charge of fatalism.

"But lest some suppose from what has been said by us that we claim that whatever happens comes to pass by a fatal necessity, this too we will explain. . . ." But the explanation offered hardly amounts to more than an assertion of man's free will as necessary to a true doctrine of moral responsibility. Where Justin goes beyond this assertion he runs into a conditional view of prophecy that would in the end nullify the value of the argument as used by him (cf. Apol. 43 ff).

Finally the necessity which the Fathers were under of accounting for the unfulfilled predictions witnesses, negatively, to the importance attached to the predictive theory of prophecy. The prophecies of Christ's exaltation gave special trouble in this connection. But this difficulty was solved, as we have seen, by Justin, and following him by Tertullian, by the theory of the two advents.

Thus, in the express definitions of prophecy, in the insistence upon the sign-theory of prophecy, and in the charges which the Fathers were compelled to meet of fatalism and non-fulfilment, we can see how the entire emphasis fell upon the predictive element.

II

But the extent to which the predictive theory of prophecy was carried is even more startlingly illustrated by the kind of instances of prediction and fulfilment adduced by the Fathers than by the statements of principle cited in the foregoing.

The so-called Messianic Psalms are regularly referred directly and exclusively to Christ. Their historical backgrounds are expressly denied or ignored.

Ps. 24 does not refer to Solomon or to Hezekiah, but "to our Christ alone." That none of the things mentioned in Ps. 72 happened to Solomon "is evident." Ps. 110 cannot refer to Hezekiah, as the Jews held, but to "our Jesus." Similarly Pss. 45, 47, 99 are unhesitatingly referred to Christ. The application of Ps. 96 to Christ is defended by Justin against Trypho's correct contention that it refers to God. The tenth verse of this psalm was a special bone of contention. The Septuagint reads: "Tell ye among the nations the Lord reigneth *from the wood.*" "From the wood" is not found in the Hebrew text, and accordingly Justin accuses the Jews of having deleted this signal prophecy of the cross from their Bibles. Tertullian vehemently urges this passage against Marcion: "I want to know what you understand by it. Perhaps you think some wooden king of the Jews is meant and not Christ who overcame death by his sufferings on the cross and thence reigned.' "The whole of Ps. 22 refers to Christ, . . . It contains the entire passion of Christ" (Justin and Tertullian). On the basis of this view of the Psalms a wealth of Christian material is acquired by the Fathers, and they prove out of the Psalms the preëxistence and deity of Christ (God in the royal Psalms being identified with the Messiah) and utilize the various statements in them as predictions of the incarnation, passion and exaltation of Christ.

In connection with the Incarnation and Virgin Birth the following passages are employed again and again. Is. 53:8 (Who shall declare his generation) refers to Christ's mysterious origin. "No one who is of men has a descent that cannot be declared" (Justin and Irenæus). In Gen. 49:11, the reference to the blood of the grape

is evidently designed, "because Christ has blood not from the seed of men but from the power of God. For as God and not man has produced the blood of the vine, so also [the Logos] has signified that the blood of Christ would not be of human generation, but of the power of God" (Justin and Tertullian). The stone cut out without hands, Dan. 2:34, also signifies that Christ's birth was not due to the will of man but of God (Justin). Of course the interpretation of Is. 7:14, combined with 8:4, is a matter of special moment in the early apologetic literature. The incorrect LXX reading at 8:4 was unhesitatingly followed ("For before the child shall know how to cry my father and mother, he [that is, the child] shall take away the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria before the King of Assyria"), and it was assumed that the boy in 8:4 was identical with the boy 7:14. Hence Justin argues against Trypho that the boy, Immanuel, could not have been Hezekiah, for Hezekiah never did what is predicted of the boy in 8:14. Tertullian elaborates this argument with his usual hot invective and stinging irony against Marcion's similar contentions: "Those who hold to a warrior Christ [namely at 8:4] should examine the age, which does not admit of a reference to a man, much less to a warrior, although, to be sure, he might be about to call to arms by his cry as an infant, might be about to sound the alarm, not with a trumpet but with a rattle, might be about to seek his foe, not on horseback or in a chariot or from a parapet, but from a nurse's neck or nursemaid's back, and so be destined to subjugate Damascus and Samaria from his mother's breasts." Having demolished an historical interpretation of the passage in this drastic fashion, Tertullian proceeds to interpret the

riches of Damascus of the offerings of the Magi, and the spoils of Samaria of the Magi themselves, Samaria being a symbol of idolatry from which they were rescued, while the King of Assyria represented Herod.

It is over the Passion that the prophetic shadows most thickly gather. Dt. 33: 13–17 (the blessing of Joseph) is a favorite Messianic passage, and v. 17, especially, is interpreted of the cross. "No one," according to Justin, "could say that the horns of an unicorn represent any other fact or figure than the type which portrays the cross." The elaboration of the interpretation is found most interestingly expressed by Tertullian. Joseph "was not of course designated as a mere unicorn with its one horn or a minotaur with two, but Christ was indicated in him, a bullock in respect of both his characteristics, to some as severe as a judge, to others as gentle as a savior, whose horns are the extremities of the cross. For of the antennæ which are a part of the cross, the ends are called horns, while the midway stake of the whole frame is called the unicorn. By this virtue, then, of his cross, and in this manner horned, he is now both pushing all nations through faith, bearing them away from earth to heaven, and will then push them through judgment, casting them down from heaven to earth."

Is. 65: 2 is regularly interpreted as symbolic of the cross. Ps. 22 is expounded verse by verse of Christ's humiliation. Of course v. 16 in its LXX text was especially insisted upon. No one among the Jews ever suffered in this peculiar way but Jesus, and hence it must refer to him (Justin, Tertullian). Besides the usual interpretations of v. 1 of Christ's cry on the cross, of vss. 7, 8 of the derision hurled at him, and v. 16 of the crucifixion itself, we have the following additional examples

furnished by Justin. V. 9 (my hope from the womb of my mother, according to the LXX) refers to his deliverance in his infancy from Herod; v. 15 to Christ's silence in Pilate's judgment hall; v. 12 to the band that arrested Jesus; v. 13, combined with Hos. 10:6 (LXX), to the fact that Pilate sent Jesus bound to Herod; v. 14 to the bloody sweat; v. 21 (the horns of the unicorn) to the cross again, etc.

In the collection of correspondences between the Prophets and Jesus at the end of Tertullian's argument (*Against Marcion,* IV. 41–43) we find the following: Is. 29:13 refers to the kiss of Judas. "The Christ of the Prophets was destined to be betrayed with a kiss for he was the son of him who was honored with the lips by the people." The darkness of the sixth hour is foreshadowed in Is. 50:3 and Amos 8:9. The "happy man" of Ps. 1 is Joseph of Arimathea. "It was very meet that the man who buried the Lord should thus be noticed in prophecy." . . . "Prophecy again does not omit the office of the women who resorted before daybreak to the sepulchre," and Hos. 5:16–6:2 is cited in proof of this statement. Tertullian asks concerning the word of institution — *this is my body* —"but why call his body bread and not rather a melon, which Marcion must have had in lieu of a heart. He [Marcion] did not understand how ancient was this figure of the body of Christ, who said of himself by Jeremiah (11:19), "I was like a lamb or ox that was brought to the slaughter and I knew not that they had devised a device against me, saying, Let us cast the tree upon the bread [a corrupted reading of the LXX], which means of course the cross upon his body." The wine as symbol of the blood and of the passion is prefigured in Is. 63:1 ff. and "more clearly

still" in Gen. 49:9–12, "Christ being delineated in the person of the patriarch." This last passage is a favorite with Justin. The chronological question raised by v. 10 was especially debated by him. V. 11a was of course fulfilled at the time of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, but further as "the unharnessed colt was a symbol of the Gentiles, even so the harnessed ass was a symbol of your [Trypho's] nation [the point is that the Jews are under the yoke of the law]. The garments washed in wine symbolize the believers cleansed by the blood of Christ's passion." We have already seen how the divinity of Christ was proved by Justin from the blood of the grape.

Ps. 2 is also directly Messianic, predicting the conspiracy against Christ by Herod and Pilate, and Is. 53 of course is, with Ps. 22, the prophecy of the passion most frequently relied upon.

Of the same character as the foregoing are the prophecies of Christ's exaltation, or of the two advents. Ps. 3:5 (I laid me down and slept, I awaked for the Lord sustained me), and Is. 53:9 (His burial has been taken away from the midst), are prophecies of the resurrection. Ps. 24 is a prophecy of the exaltation of Christ, but also implies his humiliation, as the question, "Who is this king of glory?" clearly indicates. Christ was at first unrecognizable because of his uncomely appearance. Ps. 110:7 refers to the advent of humiliation in the first clause, "he shall drink of the brook in the way," and the advent of glory in the second clause, "therefore shall he lift up his head!" Ps. 72 of course refers to Christ's exaltation.

The prophetic type as distinct from the specific prediction is found everywhere in the Old Testament by the Fathers. The distinction between them comes out in an

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interesting way in Justin's interpretation of Ex. 17. Ex. 17:16, God will wage war against Amalek with concealed hand (LXX), is a direct prophecy of the first advent in which "the concealed power of God is in Christ the crucified." On the other hand Moses' outstretched hands supported by Aaron and Hur are a type of the cross, while Joshua who led the fight is a type of the name Jesus. The brazen serpent is a favorite symbol of the crucifixion; similarly the paschal lamb which was "roasted and dressed up in the form of a cross, for one spit is transfixed right through from the lower parts up to the head, and one across the back." Rahab's scarlet thread is a favorite symbol of the blood of the passion, and the two goats of the day of atonement (Lev. 16) typify the two advents. As illustrations of the length to which the Fathers might go in their hunt for types, two catenæ may be cited from Justin and Tertullian. Justin finds the cross typified by the tree of life, by the rod of Moses, by Jacob's wands, by Aaron's rod which budded, by the tree where God appeared to Abraham at Mamre, by the rod and staff of the Twenty-third Psalm, by the stick cast by Elisha into the water which made the axe swim, and by the rod that pointed out Judah to be the father of Tamar's sons. The wooden ark which saved Noah may also be included here. Tertullian propounds the question why there were just twelve Apostles and not some other number and answers it as follows: "In truth I might from this very point conclude of my Christ that he was foretold, not only by the words of the prophets, but by the indication of the facts [i.e. the historical types], for of this number I find figurative hints running up and down the Creator's dispensation in the twelve springs of Elim, in the twelve

gems of Aaron's priestly garment, in the twelve stones appointed by Joshua, the Apostles being thus prefigured as springs watering the gentile world, as gems shedding their luster upon the church's robe, as stones massive in their faith." After this explanation he triumphantly exclaims, "What equally good defense of such a number has Marcion's Christ to show?" and he concludes the whole passage with the challenge, "Will not such a Christ be [the Christ] of the prophets?" From the above instances of alleged prediction which it is believed are fairly typical, as well as from their statements of principles, it is clear how much weight the Fathers attached to the argument from prophecy. Prediction is the great function of the prophet and accordingly predictions are found everywhere, "up and down the creator's dispensation."

CHAPTER III

THE EXEGETICAL METHOD IN THE PATRISTIC ARGUMENT FROM PROPHECY: THE ALLEGORY

If the examples of prediction and fulfilment cited in the preceding chapter be carefully examined it is obvious that in conducting the argument from prophecy the Fathers almost totally disregarded the historical sense of the prophecies, i.e. the sense which they must have had both for those who originally uttered them and for those who first heard them. Both the historical occasions out of which the prophecies arose and the meaning which they must have had in their contexts were ignored, and only because they were ignored could those multitudinous correspondences between prophecy and fulfilment be established which were so convincing to the minds of the Fathers.

For they were convincing, there is no question of that. The passage just cited from Tertullian shows how seriously they took the argument from these analogies which seem to us so fanciful. How could this be? Why could they appeal with such confidence to arguments that seem to us almost puerile? This question leads us to the next stage in our discussion. The exegetical method utilized by the Fathers to secure such astonishing results is the allegorical or mystical or spiritualizing (pneumatic) method.[1]

[1] The terms "allegorical," "mystical" and "pneumatic" are used in what follows as practically synonymous.

This mystical or allegorical method of interpreting the prophecies is but the specific application *to them* of the general method of interpretation by which the Early Church was enabled to construe the Old Testament as a Christian document. If we would understand the subsequent developments in the history of the interpretation of prophecy, it is necessary at this point to consider at some length what may be called the philosophy of the method and the extent to which it was employed in those days, not only in the Christian Church, but among Jews and Gentiles as well.

I

There are two prime conditions out of which the mystical method of exegesis has always arisen. When a nation or a sect possesses sacred books which are regarded as *inspired*, there is invariably the conviction that the meaning of these books does not lie merely on the surface, but that the simplest words contain, through the immediate operation of God's spirit, profundities of meaning which can only be fathomed by spiritual processes. The mystical method of exegesis, which does not stop at the literal and historical sense of a passage, has always been the most effective means for eliciting the spiritual mysteries that are supposed to lie behind the letter of an inspired document. The mystical method is thus naturally resorted to *for purposes of edification.* Again, when such a document originates, as is usually the case, in a remote era, it almost always contains difficulties for those who live long subsequent to the time of its origin, due to the changed conditions of life and thought. If such a document is to retain its

canonical authority as inspired Scripture, these difficulties must be removed. Again the mystical method furnishes the readiest means to this end. It is instinctively resorted to not only for edification but for *apologetic purposes.* In a very interesting passage in his work on *Christian Doctrine*, Augustine quite explicitly recognizes the conditions just posited for the rise of the allegory. He says: "As men are prone to estimate sins, not by reference to their inherent sinfulness but rather by reference to their own customs, it frequently happens that a man will think nothing blamable except what the men of his own country and time are accustomed to condemn and nothing worthy of praise or approval except what is sanctioned by the custom of his contemporaries, and thus it comes to pass that if Scripture either enjoins what is opposed to the custom of the hearers or condemns what is not opposed, and if at the same time the authority of the Word has a hold upon their minds, they think that the expression is figurative." Augustine illustrates his point by the case of a man "who has embraced the life of celibacy and made himself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake . . . and hence contends that the commandments in Scripture about loving and ruling a wife are not to be taken literally but figuratively." The writings of the Fathers are full of this method of argumentation. In his interpretation of the two goats in Lev. 16 as the two advents, Justin takes occasion to express his theories of interpreting Scripture. He charges the Jews with "expounding these things in a low way and of imputing much weakness to God when they listen to these things thus barely and do not investigate the force of the things uttered." In other words, it is derogatory to God and a misapprehension of the real meaning of

Scripture to take it only literally. He continues: "But if your teachers only expound to you why female camels are spoken of in this passage and not in that, or why so many measures of fine flour and so many measures of oil are used in the offerings, and so [expound] in a low and sordid manner, while they never . . . expound the points that are great and worthy of investigation, . . . will they not deserve the condemnation of the Lord Jesus who said unto them: 'Whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outwardly and within are full of dead men's bones, which pay tithe of mint and *swallow a camel*, ye blind guides'" [note the play on Mt. 23:27, 23 f]. He goes on to blame the Jews for discussing why an "a" was added to Abraham's name and an "r" to Sarah's (compare the LXX), but who pay no attention to the change of Oshea's name to Joshua (Jesus), (compare Nu. 13:16). "Therefore Christ has escaped their notice." He then gives a most elaborate, mystical explanation of Joshua as a type of Christ. To understand these mysteries a spiritual gift is of course necessary. From Justin's expositions various canons for eliciting the spiritual meaning can be deduced. (1) If a statement of Scripture in its literal sense contradicts another statement of Scripture, it must have a mystical sense. For example, the setting up of a brazen serpent contradicts the command against graven images; hence the brazen serpent must be a type. (2) If a thing is unnatural or improbable it is to be interpreted typically. At the battle of Amalek, Moses sat while he prayed with outstretched hands. The sitting posture in a prayer of supplication is unnatural. Hence Moses in this position was a type of the cross. (3) Whatever would be immoral if taken literally must of course be figurative. Thus the polyg-

amy of the Patriarchs lends itself admirably to the mystical exegesis. "The Jewish teachers never look at the divine motive which prompted each act, but only at the corrupting passions." (4) Things unworthy of God must be resolved into types. This may be inferred from Justin's treatment of the ritual. He has little use for the ritual as letter. As a philosopher he cannot believe that God has any real interest in the ceremonial; hence his allegorizing of it. (5) Statements in the prophecies and Psalms which, according to Justin, cannot be explained of any historical person must therefore refer to Christ. Ps. *72*, for example, cannot refer to Solomon, "since none of the things mentioned in the psalm refer to him"; accordingly it must refer to Jesus. The justification of the allegorical method of interpreting the Scripture, which is more or less implicit in Justin, is explicit in Origen, who attempted to give to the allegory a scientific elaboration. In the fourth book of his *De Principiis* he discusses the two points of the inspiration and interpretation of the Scriptures in their immediate connection with each other and shows how we are to expect to find profound and mystical meanings in an inspired writing. He elaborates a threefold meaning of Scripture corresponding to body, soul and spirit. The spiritual meaning is of course the all-important meaning. All Scripture has this spiritual meaning, though only parts of it have the corporeal meaning, i.e. while only certain statements can be taken literally, all must be taken allegorically. Such a position permits him to make the most drastic sort of criticisms upon the letter of Scripture. Much of the law of Moses, taken literally, becomes for Origen impossible or absurd. The incest of Lot's daughters, the polygamy of the Patriarchs, the

tricks of Jacob, the details of the tabernacle, the genealogies, are all unworthy subjects of divine revelation if taken literally. How irrational is it to forbid the eating of vultures when no one would ever think of eating them any way. On the other hand when the law commands to offer a "goat-stag," [1] this is a command to do the impossible since no such animal ever existed, etc. It may be remarked in passing that Origen carried the full apparatus of the allegorical method over into the New Testament also.

But it must not be supposed that a method of exegesis which seems to us so utterly arbitrary and unconvincing was adopted by the Fathers in any capricious or irresponsible spirit. In the use of this method they showed themselves to be true children of their own age. In order to do justice to them it is therefore necessary to set this method of exegesis in its proper historical perspective. This is also necessary to do in order to understand the full significance of the subsequent developments and to draw from them the necessary inferences with reference to our own attitude toward the interpretation of prophecy.

II

The Fathers availed themselves of the mystical method of interpreting Scripture and applied it specifically to the interpretation of prophecy because it was the recognized method in their day of interpreting sacred documents.

The Fathers were no doubt influenced to some extent by the methods of interpreting the Old Testament in vogue among the Jewish rabbis. The written law was

[1] Origen here follows the LXX translation of a word found only in Dt. 14:

theoretically the Canon of the Jews, their great dogmatic authority. But there had grown up in the course of time the oral law, the *paradosis,* or "Tradition," of the New Testament, intended partly to accommodate the written law to the changed conditions of Jewish life, partly to unfold, as it was believed, the fuller meaning of the written law. The rabbinic exegesis grew up to meet a great dogmatic necessity. It must vindicate the oral tradition out of the written Law. This exegesis preserved the semblance of a literalistic interpretation of Scripture, but it was oftentimes almost as unhistorical as the mystical interpretation itself. But it was not this exegesis which influenced the Fathers to any great extent. The roots of the patristic exegesis must be looked for in another direction. They go back to the philosophic and apologetic exegesis of Alexandrine Judaism, which in turn is rooted in the exegetical method of the Greeks, more particularly of the Stoics. In the rabbinic exegesis there was little or no attempt to adapt the Old Testament to changed philosophical or ethical conceptions. Difficulties in the practical application of the Law were no doubt felt, as is illustrated in the regulations adopted for the Release year, but in general, Palestinian Judaism still lived and moved and had its being in the Law. They still had a sense for the meaning of its letter. But the Hellenistic Jews, who were at all acquainted with philosophy, were in a different position. Their problem was to recommend their Scriptures to the Greek and at the same time to explain to themselves the peculiarities in it which were forced into bold relief upon the background of the Greek philosophic thought with which they had become acquainted. This was a most formidable problem, indeed. The Old Testament was distinctly an

oriental book. Its world of thought and feeling was entirely out of touch with the Hellenic world. The Semitic and the Greek intellect were as unlike as the languages in which each found expression. The anthropomorphic conception of God in the Old Testament, which gave difficulty even to the later Palestinian Jew, would present an almost insurmountable difficulty to the Greek philosopher, whose idea of God was a τὸ ὄν, an "absolute." How was this literary product of a so totally different civilization to be adjusted to the demands of Hellenic culture?

This was the problem which Alexandrian Judaism set itself to solve. It did it by means of the allegorical method of interpretation. By this method it was possible to explain the Old Testament in terms of Greek philosophy. The Jewish thinker who sums up in himself in typical form all that Alexandrian Judaism stood for in this connection is Philo of Alexandria. Thoroughly trained in Greek philosophy and enamored of it, and at the same time a devout Jew and a firm believer in the inspiration of the Jewish Scriptures, he set himself the task of reconciling these two systems of thought and experience so alien to each other. He did this by the thoroughgoing application to the Old Testament of the mystical method of exegesis which he had borrowed from the Greeks themselves. It will be necessary, therefore to look briefly at the origin and employment of the allegory among the Greeks.

III [1]

In the earliest expression of religious feeling among the Greeks imagination rather than morals was the most influential factor. The Greek imagination looked out upon a wonder world. Nature for him was personal, all its powers were personified. This was the age of myth-making. The world was full of gods and demi-gods and heroic personages, all of whom had a most real existence for the Greek — this most attractive child-man of the ancient world. In these myths all his patriotism and religion, all his poetry and art, found expression. The myth was the most characteristic product of the Greek mind. It was the *rerum divinarum et humanarum scientia.* If the myth was "the popularized expression of the divine and heroic faith of the people," as Grote calls it, the religion of the Greeks, the epic poetry of Homer and Hesiod, particularly of Homer, as the literary deposit of these myths, was to all intents and purposes the Greek Bible. This fact was recognized by Herodotus, as Athenagoras points out in the seventeenth chapter of his *Plea for the Christians.* Again all the poets were supposed to be inspired, Homer especially. Homer was at the basis of all Greek culture and religion. His epics were the text-books of education in the grammar schools and the great repositories of moral truth. As time went on the myths and Homer did not lose their hold upon the Greek mind, but became more and more ingrained in his consciousness. They were a part of his intellectual fur-

[1] For the material in this section the following works have been especially consulted: Grote, *History of Greece,* Vol. I, Chap. 16; Zeller, *Stoics, Epicureans and Peripatetics,* English trans., Chap. XIII; Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas, etc.,* The Hibbert Lectures for 1888; Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandrien.*

niture, just as the Bible up to the last quarter of a century has been a part of our mental equipment. Any allusion to them could count on being understood, just as with us the use of a Bible phrase or figure could count upon an intelligent response. And any real or apparent attack upon the myths was resented by the average Greek as impious. It was because the Athenians thought that Socrates undermined faith in them that they condemned him to death. But as time went on the Greek intellect developed. Instead of the child looking forth with wide-eyed wonder upon the beautiful world in which he found himself, imagining every river to be the haunt of some nymph, every mountain the seat of some divinity, there arose the scientist, the historian, the philosopher. Thales, Pythagoras, Xenophanes, of the sixth century B. C., laid the foundations of natural science. The people of the Homeric age had personalized nature; natural phenomena were the result of the personal will of the deities. These scientists for the first time introduced the idea of the impersonality of nature and thus made possible the accurate observation of its laws. These were something that now became calculable and not dependent upon the caprice of an offended or placated deity. For the first time the idea of *phusis* was introduced and the word *kosmos* gained a new meaning (an ordered world). With Herodotus and Thucydides the historical sense began to develop. Their minds were trained to observe and catalogue the actions of their contemporaries, or of men like themselves who had lived before them. In philosophy, as for example in the teachings of Socrates, Plato and the Stoics, we find a higher ethical standard developing. To all these points of view the popular religion of mythology and the people's Bible,

Homer, presented the gravest difficulties. What could a natural scientist, who looks upon nature as impersonal, make of a dryad- and a naiad-haunted world? What could an historian, accustomed to test statements by scientific evidence and to observe the actual facts of the life about him, do with the incredibilities of the Homeric myths and legends? What attitude could a moralist assume toward the stories of the wars, the cruelty, the intrigues and licentiousness of the gods? Here we have the same problem arising in these early times to which Augustine refers in the passage cited above. Given an ancient religion deposited in an inspired document, how can it be harmonized with the inevitably changing life and thought of the people which accepts it? This problem of the reconciliation of advancing culture with traditional religion became one of the chief fields for the exercise of Greek thought. Some thinkers contented themselves with a mild criticism of the ancient standards, toning down as best they could what was objectionable. Thus Pindar protests against the story that Pelops had been murdered by his father and served up at table and regards the narrative as a fabrication. Æschylus and Sophocles allow themselves even greater liberties in the way of moralizing the myths. Sometimes text-emendations were resorted to in order to avoid difficulties. It is significant of the changed ethical feeling of later times that Euripides was blamed for introducing into his tragedies the illicit passions of Phædra. His enemies admitted the truth of the story, but held that it ought to be kept out of the public view, just as Plato in his Republic would exclude the myths from the curriculum of the schools.[1] Others were bolder still and openly attacked

[1] Compare our own omission of certain passages in the Old Testament from public reading.

Homer as immoral. Xenophanes of the sixth century, founder of the Eleatic school, said, "All things which are hateful and censurable among men, Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods." But the majority of even the thinkers among the Greeks considered it impious to go to such lengths. While daring to criticize this or that detail in the traditional mythology, they accepted the system as a whole and sought to avoid its difficulties in other ways. Two methods were employed. The first was that of rationalistic exegesis. This was the attempt to explain the myths as ordinary history, and has a striking analogy in the methods applied to the Bible by the so-called Vulgar Rationalism of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The first trace of this method seems to be found in Heraclitus of Miletus (the sixth century B. C.), who rationalized Cerberus into a great serpent which dwelt in a cave on Cape Tænarus. Thucydides rationalized the Trojan War, treating it in much the same way as he did the Peloponnesian War in his own day. Euhemerus (about 300 B. C.) was one of the main exponents of this rationalistic exegesis, from whom it gained the name of Euhemerism, and it was followed in varying degrees by Polybius, Strabo, Diodorus and Pausanias, though Diodorus makes the pious confession that "we show our reverence to the god by acquiescing in the incredibilities of his history"— an attitude which finds its counterpart in the attitude of very many persons toward Old Testament narratives at the present time. Polybius, for example, rationalizes Æolus into a man skilled in navigation and a good weather prophet, Scylla and Charybdis into pirates in the straits of Messina. Grote, from whom most of these illustrations are taken, also quotes from a certain Palæphatus

of unknown date, possibly of the third century B. C., who interprets the dragon which Cadmus killed as a king of Thebes named Draco; the dragon's teeth are elephant's teeth which the rich Phœnician, Cadmus, had brought with him. The sons of Draco sold these teeth and employed the proceeds to levy troops with!

The second method, and the one more generally employed, by which to avoid the difficulties of the myths for later times was the allegorical interpretation. To meet the charges of immorality brought against the myths by Xenophanes, Theagnis of Rhegium (about 520 B. C.) developed the idea of a double sense in Homer and Hesiod, the literal sense and the spiritual sense behind the letter. This idea was taken up by Anaxagoras and Metrodorus in the next century. There were two main classes of the allegory, the ethical and the physical. The latter was the broader in its scope and embraced the nature of the gods, of the soul and of the world. In Anaxagoras the allegory was more ethical; Zeus represented the mind; Athena, art, etc. Metrodorus seems to have especially developed the physical allegory. For him the gods and heroes were the symbols of the forces of nature. All physical science was found in Homer. "Homer," says Plutarch, "is the first to philosophize in ethics and physics," and Cicero tells us in *De Natura Deorum* II. 24 that "physical meaning is not inelegantly included in impious fables" [the myths]. Thus the doctrine that all things originated from water was based on the Homeric line, "Ocean, the genesis of gods, and Tethys, their mother." The contrary doctrine of Heraclitus that fire was the formative principle was also supported by Homer, who makes Hephæstus prepare the shield of Achilles, the symbol of the world. The proof

of the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls was found in the fact that Achilles and Hector talked with their horses or in the recognition of Odysseus by his faithful dog. This allegorical method of treating Homer and Hesiod was especially elaborated by the Stoics, who seem, according to Zeller, to have borrowed it from the Cynics. They carried it to such lengths that Cicero jokingly says: "The ancient poets might be thought to have been Stoics though they never dreamed of these things." As the Hellenistic Jews were especially influenced by Stoic thought, it was very natural for Philo to utilize the Stoic method of interpretation for his own purposes.

There was also another factor which contributed to the establishment of this method of interpretation, and that was the growth of the mystery religions. Religion becomes in a way an aristocratic affair, the privilege of the few. Only the initiates could enter into its higher truths. Hence the poets were supposed to veil their philosophies and ethical truths purposely in symbols in order that the common people might not desecrate them. In Heraclides (not to be confounded with Heraclitus) and Cornutus, two Stoic writers of uncertain date, but possibly belonging to the first century A. D., we find the classical allegory reaching its culmination. The apologetic interest in the method is seen in the statement of Heraclides that "Homer would be immoral if he were not allegorized," and again he says that "the allegory is the antidote to impiety," with which may be compared the statement of Sallust that "the mind must see at once that the facts as told [the allusion is to the immoralities of Homer] are not to be taken as being themselves real truth, but are simply a veil." Accordingly

the story of Ares, Hephæstus and Aphrodite is a picture of iron subdued by fire, and hence "there is no stain of unholy fables in his (Homer's) words; they are pure and free of all impiety." [1] According to Cornutus, Prometheus, chained to the rock and with his liver perpetually gnawed by vultures, is a picture of a man "chained to the painful necessities of life and gnawed by petty cares." An anonymous writer of a somewhat later date wrote a treatise entitled, "A short essay on the wanderings of Odysseus in Homer, worked out in conjunction with ethical reflections and rectifying what is rotten in the story as well as may be for the benefit of readers." The wanderings are interpreted as the trials and temptations of human life. Scylla and Charybdis represent the temptations which arise from the mind and the body, respectively, between which we are called upon to steer. The sirens are the alluring pleasures of life, against which the mind must be filled with divine words, as the ears of Odysseus were filled with wax. In view of such illustrations the sarcasm of Seneca is justified: "Some make Homer a Stoic, others an Epicurean, others a Peripatetic, others an Academian; nothing of these [schools] appears to be in him because all are in him." [2]

But if the Greeks could so lose their sense of the original meaning of their ancient literature and therefore be tempted to accommodate its various concrete details by means of the allegory to the intellectual and moral conceptions of a later and more advanced civilization, it

[1] We are at once reminded of Irenæus's treatment of the incest of Lot's daughters.

[2] Those who have sought to discover in the first chapter of Genesis inspired evidence for prevailing scientific theories will come under a like condemnation.

need not surprise us to find the same method employed by the philosophically trained Alexandrine Jews in their treatment of the Old Testament. Among them the motives for the allegory mentioned by Augustine operated in their greatest intensity. On the one hand the Alexandrine Jews, especially Philo, had the highest possible theory of verbal inspiration, and it may be laid down as a general rule that the resort to allegory is proportioned to the degree of inspiration attributed to a book. On the other hand no greater contrast can be imagined than that between the Old Testament in its historical sense and Greek philosophical speculation. Hence the need of the allegory, by which the Old Testament could be resolved into Greek philosophy, was imperative. Philo, it must also be remembered, in whom the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament finds its chief Jewish exponent, was especially influenced by the Stoics among whom this method was particularly cultivated. By means of the allegory the Old Testament had become a text-book of Greek philosophy. By the same means why could it not become a Christian book?

IV

When the Early Church was confronted with the problem of interpreting the Old Testament as a Christian document, it is evident from what has just been said that they had the exegetical method by which this could be accomplished ready at hand. The allegorical method was the recognized method of interpreting sacred books and had already been applied on a great scale by Philo to the interpretation of the Old Testament. It is true that the Christians were blamed even in their own day

for resorting to the allegory. Celsus sneers at the moral difficulties of the Old Testament and accuses Jews and Christians alike "of taking refuge in allegory because they were ashamed of these things." But the Christians could retort in kind. Tatian accuses Metrodorus of "very foolishly turning everything into allegory" in his interpretations of Homer, and Origen replies to the sneer of Celsus at Christian allegorizing that the Greeks practiced the same method, and he adduces an instance of how Chrysippus of Soli, "an ornament of the Stoic sect," attempted to allegorize an immoral picture at Samos of Jupiter and Juno. These mutual recriminations are explained by the fact that the allegorical method proceeds on the assumption of the inspiration of the document which is allegorized, and the pagan and the Christian did not recognize the inspiration of each other's Scriptures. At this point the fundamental weakness of the method begins to emerge, of which more will be said in a moment.

But enough has been presented to show that in adopting the allegorical or mystical method of interpretation the Fathers cannot be properly accused of arbitrariness or folly. It would have been a most amazing thing if they had not done so, as may be seen from the following considerations. As has already been observed, the Old Testament was at first the only canon in the Christian Church. The New Testament writings only gradually acquired canonical dignity. But the Canon of the Christian Church must of course be Christian. Had not the Lord and his Apostles received the Jewish Scriptures, but would they have done so if these Scriptures had not supported their teachings? To believe the contrary was impossible. Again, the Church

had differentiated itself from Judaism. In doing this and in becoming more and more a church of Gentile converts it lost the power to appreciate the historical meaning of the Old Testament to a degree impossible for a Jew or even for a Jewish Christian who had not, as in the case of Philo, become dominated by philosophic prepossessions. Here, then, we have the two conditions which we have seen invariably give rise to the allegory, the possession of an inspired Scripture and the inability to appreciate its original meaning. Lastly, and this is of fundamental importance, the Fathers could cite as a precedent and justification for their allegorical treatment of the Old Testament the method followed by the New Testament writers themselves. Tertullian, in introducing his argument from prophecy, insists upon the allegorical method in opposition to Marcion's literalistic exegesis and cites Paul in support of it. "But why enlarge upon such a subject, when the very Apostle whom our heretics adopt [Marcion's interpretation of Christianity was based in the main upon the Pauline epistles] interpreted the Law which allows an unmuzzled mouth to oxen as they tread out the corn, not of cattle but of ourselves, and also alleges that the Rock which followed [the Israelites] and supplied them with drink was Christ, who taught the Galatians moreover that the two narratives of the sons of Abraham had an allegorical meaning . . . and gave to the Ephesians an intimation that when it was declared in the beginning that a man should leave his father and mother and become one flesh with his wife, he applied this to Christ and his Church." When Origen formulates the allegorical method in *De Principiis* or defends it against the attacks of Celsus, he relies upon these same passages. And were not the

Fathers perfectly justified in adducing these New Testament precedents? Granted that there is a very noteworthy difference in the extent to which the method was applied by the New Testament writers and by their successors, is there any fundamental difference in the *principles* of their treatment of the Old Testament? Granted the dignity and restraint with which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews Christianizes the Old Testament as compared with the frequent grotesqueness and lack of restraint in the Epistle of Barnabas, or granted the relative infrequency of the argument from prophecy in Matthew as compared with the voluminous expansion of this argument in Justin, again the question must be urged: Can any distinction *in principle* be formulated? Is not the more moderate use of the method in the New Testament due rather to the æsthetic quality of refined and restrained feeling which is so characteristic of the biblical writers? And when for a moment this fine self-discipline is relaxed, as in the case of the analogy between the three days and nights of Jonah in the belly of the fish and the Lord's death and resurrection (happily criticism has shown that this is not to be attributed to Jesus himself), does not the ease of this descent into the grotesque warn us that the general difference is only one of degree, not of kind? Must not the candid student admit that the New Testament writers were in this matter also children of their own age? Was not the mystical method of exegesis the scientific method of interpreting an inspired Scripture? Was not the Old Testament inspired for them, and were they any more likely to understand its original meaning than their contemporaries, and would they, therefore, be any less likely to adapt its meaning

to their own needs by means of mystical interpretations than the Greeks or the Alexandrine Jews who preceded them or the Fathers who were to come after them? Is inspiration a guaranty of historical knowledge or scientific method? The reader is asked to ponder these questions, for the answer to them is one of the hinges upon which the argument of this essay turns. We have now reached the point at which the meaning of all the investigations thus far pursued begins to appear. We have seen how the argument from prophecy in the sense of prediction dominated the apologetic of the early church in its struggle with Jew, Gentile and heretic. It was the final proof of the Christian religion. We have seen how the alleged correspondences between prediction and fulfilment, which were the heart of the argument from prophecy, were established by the mystical or allegorical method of expounding the Old Testament. We have seen to what lengths the search for these correspondences was carried. We have also seen that this method of exposition was not an arbitrary method from the point of view of those days, but a scientific method which had already been applied by the Greeks to their sacred documents and by the Jews to the Old Testament, and how the Fathers instinctively followed the same method. We have finally seen how the Fathers justified the method by the practice of the New Testament writers themselves and how this appeal to New Testament precedent was a perfectly appropriate appeal. We have next to notice the dogmatic consequences which follow from the method by which the proof from prophecy was conducted.

CHAPTER IV

THE ALLEGORICAL METHOD OF EXEGESIS AND THE UNCERTAINTY OF INTERPRETATION

THERE are two consequences of the method by which the Fathers conducted their argument from prophecy. The first of these is the enigma theory of prophecy, as it may be called; the second is the dilemma into which their method of exegesis forced the Fathers in their debate with heretics.

I

When the entire emphasis falls upon the minute correspondence between prediction and fulfilment the real meaning of the prophecy can of course be found only in the fulfilment. But this means that most of the prophecies must have been quite unintelligible to those who originally heard them and even to those who originally uttered them. In other words, a prophecy remains an *enigma* until its fulfilment. The word "enigma" is found but once in the New Testament (1 Cor. 13: 12) and then in a connection which has nothing to do with prophecy, but it is a favorite word of the Fathers to express their theory of prophecy. Is. 45: 3 in the septuagintal text (I will give thee treasures, dark, hidden) is the *locus classicus* of the theory. Commenting on the prophecy in Gen. 49: 10 ff, Justin remarks: "The Holy Spirit uttered these truths in parables and

in a veiled way." Commenting on Is. 7:14 he says: "Perhaps you are not aware, my friends, that there were many sayings uttered in a veiled way and in parables or mysteries or symbols which the prophets who lived long afterward exegeted!" And again: "For if the prophets declared obscurely that Christ should suffer and thereafter be Lord of all, this could not be understood . . . until He Himself persuaded the Apostles that such statements were expressly related in Scripture." To similar effect Irenæus: "For every prophecy before its fulfilment is to man [full of] enigmas and ambiguities." After the fulfilment, "the prophecies have a clear and certain exposition." Dan. 12:4, 7, and Jer. 23:20, are quoted in support of this view. In noting the various characteristics of prophecy Tertullian emphasizes the fact that "very many events are figuratively predicted by means of enigmas and allegories and parables and must be understood in a sense different from their literal description." In a remarkable exposition of Luke 10:21, the same writer seeks to show that he who reveals these things (i.e. the Christ of the New Testament) must have also previously *concealed* them, and hence that the Christ who reveals is the same as the Christ who is hidden in the prophecies of the Old Testament. Marcion's God has produced nothing "in which anything could have been hidden, no prophecies, no parables, no visions, no arguments or words or names, obscured by allegories or figures or cloudy enigmas." So Marcion's God "will not now be the revealer since he was not previously the concealer . . . for He [the true Christ] conceals [in the Old Testament] by his preparatory apparatus of prophetic obscurity, the understanding of which is open to faith, 'for if ye will not believe

ye shall not understand' " [Is. 7:9, another *locus classicus* in this connection]. According to Origen also it is a matter of general agreement that the prophecies "are filled with enigmas and dark sayings." Clement of Alexandria cites the following from the preaching of Peter: "But we, unrolling the books of the prophets which we possess who name Jesus Christ partly in parables, partly in enigmas, partly expressly in so many words. . . ." This enigma theory of prophecy which seems so strange to us would not strike the Fathers as being at all abnormal. They were familiar with the pagan ideas of prophecy as expressed in the ambiguities of the Delphic oracles and in the Sibyllines. In one famous passage Clement of Alexandria draws an express analogy between the heathen oracles and the Old Testament oracles in this regard. "All who have spoken of divine things, both Barbarians and Greeks, have veiled the first principles of things and delivered the truth in enigmas and symbols and allegories and metaphors and such like tropes. . . . Such also are the oracles among the Greeks. And the Pythian Apollo is called Loxias [the allusion being to the supposed derivation of this term from a root signifying oblique]. Also the maxims among those Greeks who were called 'wise men' indicate in a few sayings the unfolding of matter of considerable importance." Then after commenting upon several of these sayings, such as "know thyself" and "spare time," he continues: "And the spirit says *by Isaiah the Prophet*: I will give thee treasures, *hidden, dark.*" It is quite clear that Clement places Isaiah in the same category with the Pythian Apollo, and if the prophecies of Isaiah or of the other prophets really did mean what the Fathers supposed them to mean, the analogy which

is drawn between Hebrew and heathen prophets is amply justified. The passage just quoted from Clement has a more general application, however, in the connection in which it stands than simply to prophecy. The Old Testament as a whole is considered to be an enigma, whose meaning is revealed to the initiated, the men of deeper spiritual understanding. This line of thought is especially cultivated by the Alexandrine theology, which draws a distinction between faith and knowledge and connects faith with the "bare letter" of Scripture and knowledge (gnosis) with the spiritual meaning that lies beneath the crust of the letter. At this point the idea of mystery emerges in Christian theology. Let Clement but lift for us the veil of blue and purple and scarlet and fine-twined linen that hides the mysteries of the tabernacle from the eyes of the profane and we find ourselves adoring worshipers in a mystic sanctuary, vast and solemn and full of hidden meaning as the universe itself, whose variegated curtains are the primal elements that contain the revelation of God, whose holy place was the middlemost point of heaven and earth, whose seven golden candlesticks to the south of the altar of incense figured the motions of the seven planets that perform their revolutions toward the south, whose sacred ark signified the world of thought hidden to the many, while the golden figures of the cherubim with twelve outstretched wings point to the world of sense, their faces a symbol of the rational soul, their wings the lofty ministers and energies of powers, their names significant of extensive knowledge, their voices sounding in the ear of the ecstatic worshiper as a "delightsome glory in ceaseless contemplation." But it would take us too far

afield to enter into a further amplification of this fascinating theme.

II

It is obvious that the enigma theory of prophecy and the allegorical method stand in the closest relationship to each other. It is by means of the spiritualizing method of interpretation that the enigmas, the riddles, are solved. But at this point a formidable difficulty arises. How can one be sure that the right solution has been discovered? Justin's simple principle that Christ is the interpreter of prophecy can hardly support the vast array of patristic correspondences between prediction and fulfilment which have been already noted. The claim which Justin and the other Fathers, also, make, that the apprehension of the true meaning of the prophecies is a gift of the Spirit to faith, is not satisfactory. It might suffice for the individual, but would have no value in debate, where one's spiritual illumination might be denied by one's opponent. When the *historical sense of a passage is once abandoned, there is wanting any sound regulative principle to govern exegesis.* The adoption of the allegorical method by the Fathers was not arbitrary, but the method itself was wholly arbitrary. And here we arrive at the dilemma into which the patristic method of conducting the argument from prophecy by means of the mystical exegesis forced the Fathers. The mystical method of exegesis, is an unscientific and arbitrary method, reduces the Bible to obscure enigmas, undermines the authority of all interpretation, and therefore, when taken by itself, failed to meet the apologetic necessities of the time. The em-

barrassment which the mystical method occasioned the Fathers is most apparent in the Gnostic and Marcionite controversies.

In the case of these heretics the two conditions noted by Augustine for the rise of the allegory are most interestingly exemplified. In proportion as the Gnostics rejected the Old Testament as an inspired canonical authority, they rejected the allegory. Marcion in particular, whose rejection of the Old Testament was absolute, adopted the baldest kind of literalistic interpretation. On the other hand the New Testament was for them nominally authoritative. Hence the Gnostics allegorized it extensively. Marcion, it is true, appears to have consistently rejected all allegories, but the difference in this regard between himself and the Gnostics is only a further confirmation of the reasons assigned for the rise of the allegory. The Gnostics were speculative and philosophical, while Marcion's interests were intensely practical. Therefore the Gnostics were *compelled* to resort to the allegory in order to adapt the New Testament to their peculiar theosophical tenets, whereas Marcion was not subjected to this temptation. His paramount religious interest enabled him to find satisfaction in the letter of the New Testament alone. Accordingly, it is clear that in the case of the Gnostics, at least, the allegorizing of the Old Testament was not rejected on any scientific principle and, in fact, in the less radical forms of Gnosticism, where the antagonism to the Old Testament was not so pronounced, and divine elements in it were admitted, there the allegory appeared (compare the Valentinians), though not, be it observed, in an apologetic interest.

Now the Fathers followed just the opposite course.

Since the Old Testament was the original Scripture of the Christian Church and as such must be itself Christian, it was allegorized. On the other hand, the New Testament was not at first allegorized. There is scarcely a trace of an allegorical interpretation of the New Testament in the literature of the Apostolic Fathers or the Greek Apologists. Irenæus is the first orthodox Christian writer in whom the allegorical treatment of the New Testament begins to make itself felt. The reasons for this failure to allegorize the New Testament lay partly in the fact that it was not at first regarded as Scripture in the same sense in which the Old Testament was held to be Scripture, but more particularly in the fact that it was *not necessary* for these writers to allegorize it in order to make it intelligible to their Christian consciousness. They had not become so far removed as yet in time or thought from the writers of the New Testament as to necessitate the adaptation of the New Testament to their own views by means of the allegory. In this respect the orthodox were more on a footing with Marcion than with the Gnostics.[1] We can

[1] In the case of Clement and Origen, whose aim was to interpret Christianity in the terms of Greek philosophy, just as Philo before them had interpreted the Jewish religion in the same terms, the allegorical treatment of the New Testament was a matter of course. The dependence of the Alexandrine theologians in this connection upon their great predecessor is immediate and of the closest possible description. In view of the thesis of Augustine, so often alluded to, the following harmless and beautiful allegory of a New Testament passage is highly significant. Commenting upon the anointing of Christ's feet Augustine says that no one would believe that Christ permitted such an expenditure in a spirit of luxury and wastefulness, "as profligate men are accustomed to have their feet anointed at those banquets which we abhor [note the influence upon interpretation of contemporary conditions]." This act must therefore have a typical value. "The sweet odor means the good report

readily see what an impossible condition resulted for any successful apologetic which should be based on the interpretation of Scripture. The Fathers interpreted the Old Testament allegorically, the New Testament in the main historically. The Gnostics interpreted the Old Testament in the main historically and the New Testament allegorically. Marcion alone seems to have possessed the merit of consistency in this respect, for he interpreted both Testaments historically. Thus it comes to pass that in the anti-Gnostic and anti-Marcionite polemic we find the Fathers in one breath insisting upon the allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament and in the next upon the historical interpretation of the New Testament. Tertullian in arguing against Marcion introduces his proof from prophecy by citing Paul in justification of the allegory (see above), an *ad hominem* argument of considerable force, as Paul was the one authority which Marcion recognized. But when the same writer is arguing against Valentinus, who allegorized both Testaments to suit himself, he denounces the allegorical method and contends that Valentinus is even more dangerous than Marcion. "Marcion expressly and openly uses the knife, not the pen, since he made such an excision of Scripture as suited his own subject matter [the allusion is to Marcion's reduction of the New Testament Canon to ten Pauline Epistles and a mutilated rescension of Luke]; Valentinus, however, abstained from such excision . . . yet he took away more and added more by removing the *proper meaning* of every particular word and adding fantastic arrangements of

which is earned by a life of good works and the man who wins this, while following in Christ's footsteps, anoints his feet, so to speak, with the precious ointment."

things which have no real existence." The context shows that Tertullian has in mind the custom of piecing together texts dislocated from their contexts in support of a doctrine, a practice which he compares to that of "the *homerocentones,* collectors of Homeric odds and ends, who stitch into one piece, patch-work fashion, works of their own from the lines of Homer, out of many scraps put together from this passage and that." [1] Yet the man who said this is guilty of the following astounding exegetical sorites. Is. 40:9, Ps. 3:4 and 22:2 are cited as a compound prediction of the prayer of Christ on the mountain at night: "You have a mountain for the site, the night as the time, and the sound of the voice and the audience of the Father; you have the Christ of the Prophets!" Nothing could better illustrate than the juxtaposition of these two passages from the same author the power which dogmatic prepossession always exerts to inhibit clear and consistent thinking.

It will be clear from the foregoing that on the basis of the allegorical method of interpretation, the Fathers are helpless in their debate with the Gnostics and Marcion, so far as the Scriptural argument is concerned. If they allegorize the Old Testament they cannot on principle deny the right of the Gnostics to allegorize the New Testament, or the Old Testament either if they saw fit to do so. And as between the various allegorical interpretations, what principle could decide which was the proper one? It should be observed, however, that the allegorical method was recognized both by the Fathers and their Gnostic opponents as a legitimate principle of

[1] Irenæus criticizes the same custom in the same way.

exegesis. There is a common exegetical standing ground. The only question was as to the proper sphere in which the allegory could be applied and the proper results of its application. The situation was practically analogous to the situation which arose between the pagans and the Christians. Each side recognized the legitimacy of the allegory; they differed only as to the sphere of its application. But it is obvious that allegory versus allegory can lead to no secure results in the debate. As against Marcion there was no common exegetical standing-ground whatever, so necessary to any fruitful debate. The allegory could not be successfully used against the Gnostics because they too could allegorize; it could not be successfully used against Marcion because he consistently followed an entirely different principle of exegesis.

It is interesting to observe that Clement of Alexandria and Origen do not appear to be fully conscious of the difficulties in which the allegorical method logically involved them. They had a supreme confidence in the self-sufficiency of Scripture. It was its own interpreter. Its great Christian truths were self-authenticating to the spiritually illuminated. All that was necessary to do was to elaborate the *technique* of the allegory in order to possess the key to all biblical mysteries. And this Origen did. He sought to place the allegory on a scientific basis. Far different was the attitude of Irenæus and Tertullian toward the perplexities into which the allegory had led them. They frankly faced them. Thus Tertullian says: "Though most skilled in the Scriptures, you will make no progress when everything which is maintained by one side is denied by the other and whatever you deny is maintained by them

[your opponents]." One who hears such a debate will go away not knowing which side to judge heretical, " for no doubt they are able to retort the same things to us; it is indeed a necessary consequence that they should say that adulterations of Scripture and false expositions thereof are rather introduced by ourselves, inasmuch as they no less than we maintain that truth is on their side." The dilemma in which Irenæus and Tertullian found themselves because of their lack of any scientific method of exegesis could not be stated with greater candor. What was to be done in this exigency? At this point, Irenæus and Tertullian take a fatal step. *Instead of adopting a scientific principle of exegesis they introduce Church authority under the guise of Tradition as the norm of interpretation. The movement of thought which we have been following now becomes associated with the great dogmatic consolidations of the second and third centuries that led directly to ecclesiastical absolutism.*

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH AS THE AUTHORITATIVE INTERPRETER OF SCRIPTURE

To trace the growth of the conception of Tradition in the ancient Church belongs to a study of dogma. We have to deal with the idea only in its relationship to the problem created by the allegorical method of exegesis. Yet a brief sketch of the doctrinal situation which was developing at this time is necessary, if we would understand the full significance of the patristic appeal to Tradition in support of the catholic interpretation of the Scriptures as against the heretics.

I

In the Primitive Church the conception of Scripture, as we have already had occasion to remark, was limited to the Old Testament. But in addition to the Old Testament the Church was in possession of an apostolic Tradition which it regarded as also authoritative. This Traditon was found in two forms: the written tradition preserved in the apostolic writings, and an informal anecdotal tradition which had been received from those who had come into more or less direct contact with the Apostles. We meet with the latter especially in the writings of Polycarp, Papias and Justin. Of these two forms the written tradition was undoubtedly by far the

more important and influential. It is to be carefully noted that *the New Testament writings are thus subsumed under the idea of Tradition,* the teachings which the Apostles had handed down *in writing* to the Churches. It is also to be noted that the conception of it is at first historical, rather than dogmatic. In the apostolic writings are preserved the historically authentic teachings of the Apostles. But as time went on the written tradition tended to become through its own inherent power a dogmatic authority, that is, to become authoritative not simply because it was an authentic historical tradition, but because it was thought to be an inspired and infallible authority. This tendency was hastened through the Gnostic, Marcionite and Montanist controversies of the second and third centuries. These controversies forced the Church to defend its acceptance of the Old Testament as Scripture on the one hand and to insist upon apostolicity as the test of truth on the other. As a result the apostolic writings became gradually coördinated with the Old Testament as inspired and infallible Scripture. Thus far the development is seen to be distinctly favorable to the supremacy of the written tradition. The historical, written tradition becomes an infallible written tradition. In the face of such a development the informal, anecdotal recollections of the earlier, unwritten tradition, would have naturally blurred and faded away in the course of time, and the written tradition would have been left the sole authority, the supreme documentary source of the Church's faith, the final court of appeal in all controversies. But this normal course of development was not to unroll itself unhindered through the centuries. The debate with the heretics, particularly with the

Gnostics and the Marcionites, introduced new and important factors into the development. On the one hand many of the Gnostics claimed to be in possession of a secret apostolic tradition. The Apostles, they held, were not fully apprised of all the truths of the Christian religion nor had they committed all they did know to the writings generally preserved in the Church. There were other documents in addition to the usually accepted ones, which the Gnostics claimed possessed authority (cf. the Gospel of Truth among the Valentinians and the Gospel of Basilides). On the other hand Marcion accepted only a part of the New Testament writings — ten of the Pauline Epistles and a mutilated copy of Luke. In answer to these contentions the Church fell back upon the view that *only* that which was truly apostolic was authoritative and also that *all* that was apostolic was authoritative. But what was apostolic? *This is the question of the Canon.* The Church followed a correct historical instinct in its insistence upon apostolicity as a test of truth and it made an honest attempt to establish the apostolicity of the New Testament writings by historical means. But it did not succeed in establishing the apostolicity of some of the writings (e.g. the Epistle to the Hebrews or Second Peter) by a purely historical method of research. It was compelled to fall back upon the usage of the Apostolic Churches to prove their apostolicity in certain cases. In other words while apostolicity is the correct historical principle for the formation of a New Testament canon, the proof of apostolicity could not in every instance be carried through, and the usage, that is the authority, of the Church, was introduced. The written tradition as in-

corporated in the canon was no longer purely historical. It had become dogmatic. Not only had the canon taken on the characteristics of inspiration and infallibility in the course of time through its association with the Old Testament, but the authority of the Church had supplied the deficiencies of the historical evidence for it. This line of development is most clearly followed in Origen. But it is not this line which especially concerns us.

The second burning question which arose between the heretics and the orthodox Church was: How the New Testament writings are to be understood, or *the question of Interpretation.* This was occasioned, as has already been indicated, by the unregulated character of the exegesis of the times. The Gnostics claimed that they had authority in their secret apostolic tradition for their interpretations. The Old-Catholic Fathers, Irenæus and Tertullian, in order to off-set this claim, introduced the idea of a public, apostolic tradition to which, as the authoritative norm, the exposition of the Scriptures must conform. It is the consideration of this public apostolic tradition as the norm of interpretation to which we must now address ourselves.

II

If the conception of the public, apostolic tradition is analyzed, two elements in it stand out with distinctness: its content or the *creed,* and the channel through which the tradition flowed, or the *historic episcopate.* It is, of course, impossible to trace in full the development of each of these conceptions. This would involve us in some of the most intricate and disputed questions in the history of dogma. But happily the main points which

are connected with our special problem are sufficiently clear.

In the first place there can be no doubt that Irenæus at times drew at least a *formal* distinction between the written tradition, or Scripture, and the unwritten tradition. After referring to the Gnostic secret traditions and misinterpretations of Scripture and pointing his opponents to "that tradition which originates with the Apostles," Irenæus blames them for consenting "neither to Scripture nor Tradition." Again he says: "It is not necessary to seek the truth from others when it can be easily obtained from the Church; the Apostles, like a rich man depositing money in a bank, lodged in the Church's hands most copiously all things pertaining to the truth. . . . Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most important churches with which the Apostles had constant intercourse and learn from them what is clear and certain? For how should it be if the Apostles themselves had not left us any writings? Would it not be necessary to follow the course of the Tradition which they handed down to those to whom they committed the Churches?" In these passages Tradition is very clearly distinguished from the Scriptures. Irenæus can conceive of it as existing apart from the Scriptures. It is also clear that Tradition is here played off against the Gnostic misinterpretations of the Scriptures. In Irenæus the conception of an informal, anecdotal, unwritten tradition is undergoing a transformation into the idea of an authority coördinate with the written tradition. But here a question arises. In what did the Tradition find expression? Was it something indeterminate or was it definite and tangible? To

answer this question we must first ask and answer another. What is the *Canon of Faith* or of *Truth* to which Irenæus so often appeals against the heretics? The exact meaning of this phrase has been much disputed. The reason is because Irenæus himself probably uses it in different senses. At times there is little question that it is applied to the Scriptures. Yet it is not the technical name for them. The word "canon" is first applied to them in the technical sense by Athanasius. When the phrase is applied to the Scriptures it undoubtedly refers primarily to their content. On the other hand there can be as little question, I think, that the phrase is also applied to the ancient baptismal formula, the old Roman symbol, progenitor of the Apostles' Creed. And at least in one celebrated passage, in which the identification of the Canon of Truth with the creed is clearest, it is made at *the same time the norm of interpretation.* After describing various Gnostic misinterpretations of Scripture and comparing them to the work of the *"homerocentones"* (see above, p. 79), Irenæus points out that he who is really acquainted with Homer will recognize the mistakes made. "In like manner," he continues, "he also who retains unchanged in himself the *Canon of Truth* which he received in baptism will doubtless recognize the names, expressions and parables taken from the Scriptures, but will by no means acknowledge the blasphemous use which these men make of them. . . . But when he has restored every one of the expressions to its proper position and *fitted it to the little body of truth* (*somation*), he will prove the figments of these heretics to be without any foundation." There can be no reasonable doubt that "the little body of truth" is identified with the Canon of Truth received

in baptism and the context makes it certain that the latter is identified with the Roman baptismal formula. We also have the clear statement that the interpretation of Scripture is to conform to this standard. *"It is to be fitted to the little body of truth."* Irenæus, of course, does not mean that the authority of the symbol is independent of the authority of Scripture, even though the symbol itself is coördinate with Scripture. The creed and Scripture were for him undoubtedly only *two forms of the same authority.* The creed is the concentrated essence, so to speak, of Scripture. Hence the Canon of Truth, which refers especially to the content, may be applied equally to the Scripture or to the creed, for the content of both is theoretically the same. The authority of Tradition as expressed in the symbol was not considered as in any sense competing with the authority of Scripture; it was only another channel through which the authority of Scripture flowed and by which it could be more effectively utilized to wash away the stains of heresy. The distinction between the documented tradition, i.e., the Scripture, and the undocumented tradition was one of form, not of content. Nevertheless this new conception of the unwritten tradition as an authoritative body of Truth, which begins to emerge in Irenæus, is something very different from the anecdotal tradition of earlier times and contains within itself the germs of a most momentous historical development. Granted that in theory the written tradition and the unwritten tradition were only *formally* distinct, nevertheless this distinction, which is at first only formal, may soon become a real one. The unwritten tradition formally distinguished from the written tradition has now the opportunity to develop independently. The

dogmatic consequences are obvious. If the unwritten tradition was made the norm of interpretation when it was still in essential agreement with the written tradition, it would be very natural for it to remain the norm after it became differentiated in form as well as in content. This would mean that in process of time the unwritten tradition as the norm of interpretation would come absolutely to dominate the written tradition. This danger is accentuated the more it is admitted that the written tradition cannot be properly understood and needs an authoritative interpretation. But it is the allegorical method of exegesis which makes the written tradition of doubtful interpretation. In Tertullian we see how Irenæus's more flexible view of the normative character of the creed becomes fixed and rigid, how the problem of the uncertainty of scriptural interpretation for purposes of argument reacts upon his lawyer's sensibilities with growing painfulness, and how in consequence he throws himself back upon the unwritten tradition in its creedal form with increasing abandon. He devotes a whole tract to the discussion of these questions (The Præscriptions against Heretics). After describing in this tract the dilemma referred to above, which was forced upon him by the Gnostic interpretations of Scripture and which he was unable to meet because he possessed no scientific method of interpreting it, Tertullian bluntly says: *"Our appeal, therefore, must not be made to the Scripture."* Instead, he appeals to the doctrine held by the Apostolic Churches, i.e. to the unwritten tradition as formally distinct from the Scriptures. "All doctrine which agrees with the Apostolic Churches, those wombs and original sources of the faith, must be reckoned for truth, as undoubtedly

containing that which the said churches received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ and Christ from God; whereas all doctrine must be prejudged as false which savors of contrariety to the truth held by the Churches and the Apostles of Christ and of God." Tertullian does not mean to say any more than Irenæus does that what the unwritten tradition teaches differs from what the Scripture teaches. Such a position was never taken at any time in the history of the Church. Throughout that history the Scriptures have always been theoretically supreme. But what he does mean to say is that because of the doubtfulness of their interpretation the Scriptures are unusable in debate.[1] Related to Tertullian's distinction between the written and the unwritten tradition, drawn more sharply by him than by Irenæus, is his more definite identification of the Canon of Truth with the baptismal formula and the more legalistic attitude adopted toward this creed. It is significant that not the Canon of Truth or Faith but the Rule (*regula*) of Truth or Faith is Tertullian's favorite expression. The rigid Latin term is substituted for the more flexible Greek term. The creed is now a *law*. "Now with regard to the rule of faith [described in the context by a paraphrase of the old Roman symbol] you must know that which *prescribes*." . . . Again he says: "When entering into the water we make confession of the Christian faith in words of its *law*." Investigation is to be limited by this law. "To know nothing in opposition to the rule is to know all things." And again: "Wherever it shall be manifest that the true

[1] Fortunately Tertullian did not adhere to any great extent to his theory. As a matter of fact he uses the Scriptures constantly and seemingly with the greatest confidence.

Christian rule and faith shall be, there will likewise be the true Scriptures and the true exposition thereof." In this last quotation the question of the canon and the question of its exposition are united and solved by the appeal to the unwritten tradition, in the form of the Rule of Faith. But this last quotation introduces us to the second main point in our analysis of the new idea of the unwritten tradition in its relationship to interpretation. Tertullian states that the true Canon and the true expositions are to be found where the true Christian rule of faith is to be found. But where is *that* to be found? Thus far we have been dealing with the content of the unwritten tradition. The Canon or Rule of Faith stands for this content. We have now to look at the channel through which the content of the unwritten tradition reached the Fathers. This channel is the historic episcopate.

III

The ominous alliance between the unwritten tradition and the episcopal organization of the Church was also effected by Irenæus and Tertullian. The reason for it is obvious. Granted that that tradition is normative which is apostolic, have the Churches preserved the apostolic tradition? This very question is raised by Tertullian. After laying down the principle that the doctrine which agrees with the Apostolic Churches must be regarded as true, he recognizes it to be incumbent upon him "to demonstrate that this doctrine of ours which we have given as the Rule has its origin in the tradition of the Apostles." He next defends the purity and completeness of the apostolic doctrine against the attacks of the

Gnostics. But this defense by itself is not sufficient. "Since, therefore, it is incredible," he continues, "that the Apostles were either ignorant of the whole scope of the message which they had to declare, or failed to make known to men the entire rule of faith, let us see whether, while the Apostles proclaimed it simply and fully, the Churches set it forth otherwise than the Apostles had done." Granted a full and accurate original revelation through the Apostles, what is the guaranty of its correct preservation? The historic episcopate is the guaranty. "Let the heretics," Tertullian taunts, "unfold the roll of Bishops running down in due succession from the beginning in such a manner that their first bishop shall be able to show for his ordainer some one of the Apostles or apostolic men, as the churches at Smyrna or Rome are able to show. In exactly the same way the other churches exhibit those whom they regard, because appointed to the episcopal office by Apostles, as transmitters of the apostolic seed." Similarly, Irenæus points the Gnostics to "that tradition which originates from the Apostles and which is preserved by means of the succession of Presbyters in the Churches." He then instances the tradition preserved by the great and universally recognized Church of Rome which was founded by Peter and Paul, gives the list of the reputed Roman bishops from apostolic times and concludes: "In this order and by this succession the ecclesiastical tradition from the Apostles and the preaching of the truth have come down to us."

But it is not only the function of a Bishop to preserve the tradition uncorrupted from apostolic times; as the one possessed of this norm of interpretation the Bishop naturally becomes the proper interpreter of Scripture.

Irenæus points out how, according to 1 Cor. 12:28, God has placed in the Church "first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers"; "where, therefore, the gifts of the Lord have been placed, there it behoves us to learn the truth, namely from those persons who possess the succession from the Apostles. . . . For they also preserve this faith of ours in one God [the allusion is to the first article of the creed] and expound the Scriptures to us without danger, neither blaspheming God nor dishonoring the Patriarchs, nor despising the Prophets [allusions to the Gnostic criticism of the Old Testament]." It is a most significant fact for the purposes of our discussion that the chapter of which this passage is the concluding section (IV. 26) opens with a statement of the enigma theory of prophecy. A Scripture truth which is expressed in enigmas requires interpretation. The Bishop, who holds the true key to the enigmas, is the natural interpreter.

But there is a still further step to be taken in the way of allying interpretation to the unwritten tradition, and this is the most fatal step of all. We have seen how, in the establishment of the Canon, it was necessary to resort to Church authority as a substitute for the historical proof of apostolicity in the case of some of the writings, and how in proportion as this was done, the historical principle which was at the basis of the formation of the Canon was insensibly transformed into a dogmatic principle. Not only was inspiration and infallibility attributed to each separate book of the New Testament, but the collection of writings as a whole was fixed by Church authority. A precisely similar phenomenon is to be noticed in the development of the idea of the unwritten tradition as a norm of interpretation. Now in

the passages thus far cited from Irenæus and Tertullian the conception of the unwritten tradition is still essentially historical. In the first place inspiration and infallibility were not yet formally attributed to it, notably not in the case of the Roman symbol. This was not thought of as composed by the Apostles themselves, as later the Apostles' Creed was supposed to be. In the next place the Fathers undertook to show by a real historical proof that the unwritten tradition was apostolic when they produced their lists of Bishops in the Apostolic Churches who had been the custodians of the tradition from apostolic times down to their present. Therefore, when the Fathers resorted to the unwritten tradition in order to justify their interpretations of the Scriptures in the debate with the heretics, they could claim with some show of propriety that their interpretations had indeed the sanction of the Apostles, and that consequently their understanding of the Scriptures was the genuinely historical Christian understanding of them. The theory of the Fathers was historically unimpeachable. But how about the facts? After all, had the Bishops been able to preserve the unwritten tradition uncontaminated from the beginning, or had a variety of influences been at work often reshaping and modifying it in essential particulars? In the latter case the unwritten tradition would cease to be historical in the strict sense of the term. *But when Tradition ceases to be genuinely historical, it must become dogmatic if it is still to exert any influence.* In other words, just as the authority of the Church made good the deficiency of the evidence for the apostolicity of certain books of the written tradition, so it makes good the lack of the historical proof that certain elements in the unwritten tra-

dition were apostolic. This means that what the Church is really doing is not preserving tradition *but manufacturing it*. The transformation of the historical tradition into a manufactured or dogmatic tradition may be quite unconscious, usually is so, but it is none the less real. Now the development of the historical unwritten tradition, granted for the sake of the argument that there ever was such a thing in any strict sense, into a dogmatic unwritten tradition was greatly encouraged by the view that the Holy Spirit was still operative in the Church and in an especial sense in its ruling authorities. We meet with the beginnings of this essentially dogmatic view of the episcopate already in Irenæus. In the same passage in which he associates the function of interpretation with the episcopal office he urges obedience to those who, "together with the succession of Bishops, have received the *certain charism of truth*." The episcopal office in Irenæus is essentially a teaching office, and in this passage there is the suggestion that the Bishop, as a teacher, has a special spiritual endowment. It is true that Irenæus, though a Bishop, did not avail himself of any official protection for his own exegesis. He did not carry out the logic of the theory, the germ of which is found in the above passage. But what he failed to do might be done by others. From this seed-thought of Irenæus might easily grow up the conviction that the traditional interpretation of the Scriptures is apostolic simply because the apostolic Bishop endued with the charisms of truth says so. In that case the process of manufacturing tradition will become thoroughly organized and dogma will completely supplant history.

IV

There is one final step in the development of dogma which was to have a sinister, even though an indirect, bearing upon the question of interpretation. In the period with which we have been dealing and the centuries immediately subsequent, the Church was transforming itself into a sacramental institution, the presbyter was becoming a priest. As the dispenser of grace through the sacraments the priest was gradually acquiring the power of the keys, the power to open or close the doors of heaven to the suppliant. The awe which this mysterious sacramental power of the Bishop engenders will naturally be reflected in an increased respect for his dignity as a teacher, and the dogmatic development of the authority of the unwritten tradition, as the norm of interpretation, will be consummated. Irenæus and Tertullian were to be followed by Hippolytus and Cyprian! One citation from Hippolytus must suffice. He claims that heretics cannot be refuted except by "the Holy Spirit bequeathed unto the Church, which the Apostles, having in the first instance received, have transmitted to those who have rightly believed; but we, being their successors and participators in *this grace, high-priesthood and teaching, as well as being reputed guardians of the Church,* must not be found deficient." Observe here the ominous combination of the priestly and the teaching functions of the Bishop, successor of the Apostles and endowed with a special grace! It was Cyprian who was mainly responsible for the unification and consolidation of the various tendencies which have here been briefly sketched into the thoroughly wrought out conception of the Church as a great sacramental

and teaching institution. Upon the foundations so firmly laid by him the great superstructure of ecclesiastical authority, as distinct from the authority of Scripture, was erected. The transformation of the semi-historical unwritten tradition into a purely dogmatic unwritten tradition now proceeded with a greatly accelerated pace. The culmination of the development was reached along two lines: in the imposing formulation of the ecumenical creeds and in the consolidation of the power of the Bishops in the hands of the Bishops of Rome. The first result was worked out principally in the Eastern Church, the second result in the Western Church.

V

The idea that the Bishop possessed the charism of truth soon developed into the conception that a special sanctity attached to the decisions of priest-bishops duly assembled in a council. When the council represented the whole Church it was very natural to attach to it paramount authority. It remained for the half-pagan Constantine to initiate the idea of a general council. It was he who convoked the Council of Nicæa in order to settle the Arian controversies and it was he who first ascribed infallibility to it. "Whatever is determined in the holy assembly of Bishops," he maintains, "may be attributed to the divine will." In the declarations of this council we have for the first time a formal, authoritative declaration of the Church, a *written* creed. The novelty of such a thing struck contemporaries. Hilary calls attention to the fact that now the creed "begins to be written." But there was another thing about this creed that gave uneasiness even to its defenders. It was

couched in unbiblical language, in the scientific language of Greek philosophy. (Compare *homoousios.*) But the language was defended on the ground that it had been already employed by the Fathers and that it gave the sense of Scripture more scientifically and precisely. In other words the old fiction was still preserved; the creed was not put forth as something new. It was proclaimed as apostolic and as the ancient catholic faith. The exigencies of the debate with the Arians speedily dissipated the initial scruples which were felt with respect to the creed. It soon came to be regarded by all the orthodox as sacrosanct and it imparted the same character to its successors, the creeds of Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon, which were regarded as only explications of its implications. The traits of infallibility and inspiration, which we saw were originally wanting to the unwritten tradition, were now ascribed to these great creeds, and in their written form they are erected into the law of the Church, from which it is impossible to swerve by a hair's breadth. The legislation of Justinian prescribes that "the dogmas of the four councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon are to be honored as the inspired Scriptures." Somewhat later Gregory I declares: "I receive and venerate the four councils as I do the four books of the holy Gospels." And when the attempt was made to tamper with the wording and insert the *filioque* the sacrilege produced the schism between the Western and Eastern Churches! Through the Church's power to manufacture tradition the "little body of truth," which we saw emerging in Irenæus, has now become enlarged into a vast *corpus* of highly speculative theology. The expositions of Scripture which must be fitted to "the little

body" must now be conformed to the greater body, as the formal and infallible law of the Church. The fiction may be still preserved that the Scripture is still supreme and that the creed is only the apostolic interpretation of it. But in reality the unwritten tradition has undergone an independent development, and, precipitated in the formal written creed solemnly declared by the priest-bishops of the Church, gathered in a general council under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to be the only legal interpretation of the Scripture, it has for all practical purposes triumphed over the Scriptures. The theory that an apostolic norm of interpretation has been historically preserved has been transformed in practice into the dogmatic power to create tradition, to which, as the law of the Church, the interpreter of Scripture must conform or suffer everlasting damnation (anathema).[1]

[1] It is interesting to observe how this fiction of an apostolic tradition still underlies the position of the present Bishop of Oxford. In his Bampton lectures of 1896 he says: "These decisions [i.e. of the ecumenical councils] do, it is contended, simply express in a new form, without substantial addition (!) the apostolic teaching as it is represented in the New Testament. They express it in a new form for protective purposes, as a legal enactment protects a moral principle. They are developments only in the sense that they represent the apostolic teaching worked out into formulas by the aid of a terminology supplied by Greek dialectic. . . . The decrees are but a hedge, the New Testament is the pasture ground." The metaphor of the hedge has unfortunate associations. The Jew constructed a "hedge about the Law" and would no doubt have described its relation to the Law in much the same way as Bishop Gore describes the relations of the creed to the Gospels. Nevertheless so many weeds sprang out of that earlier hedge and overran the good pasture land that the Lord spent much of his life in the attempt to uproot it. The tradition of the elders was too grievous to be borne. May not the conciliar hedge similarly have seeded into the pasture land of the Gospel? The danger of Bishop Gore's position is, however, especially found in the phrase "legal enactment." The creed as the law of the Church is bound to supersede the Scriptures for all practical purposes.

In the West the development followed a somewhat different line. The practical bent of the Western Church manifested itself more in Church organization than in speculative theology. There we find the ecclesiastical authority more and more established in the hands of the Bishop of Rome. The creeds are of course accepted, but they play a less important rôle in the Western Church than does the Bishop of Rome. It is the Bishop of Rome that becomes in the West the real mouthpiece of Tradition. This led to an interesting difference in the subsequent development of the two branches of the Church. The development of dogma ceased in the Eastern Church with the formulation of the great ecumenical creeds, but in Rome it continued to roll on in ever increasing volume down to the Reformation. The Papacy itself assumed the teaching function and with it the power to declare what was apostolic tradition. It is true that the curialist theory, which locates all power in the Pope, was contested even in the West by the conciliar theologians who championed the final authority of the creeds. But after all, the Papacy and not the creeds is the distinguishing characteristic of the Western Church as compared with the Eastern.

But it may be objected that in this long discussion of the relationship of interpretation to the unwritten tradition, and in the description of the transformation of historical tradition into dogma, we have lost the thread of our argument and completely diverted the attention of the reader from the main theme of this essay. The objection has a show of reason. Nevertheless it must be regarded as in no sense pertinent. What at first sight appears to be a digression has been deliberately

elaborated in order that the way may be prepared clearly to understand the momentous change that is to take place hereafter in the argument from prophecy. Unless it is thoroughly understood how the argument from prophecy in the sense of prediction came to be inextricably connected with the more general problem of interpretation, and how the latter problem in turn became lost in the problem of the relationship of the unwritten to the written tradition, in the solution of which the Scriptures became for all practical purposes completely subordinated to the creeds on the one hand and to the Pope on the other, it will be impossible to follow intelligently the various phases of the development which is to follow and to draw from them the proper deductions. We shall see how in the Reformation times the problem of the relationship of Tradition to Scripture, or the problem of authority, is again reopened, how this in turn reopened the problem of interpretation, how the new solution of the latter problem was applied specifically to the interpretation of prophecy, and how this finally led to an entirely changed conception of prophecy. This rather roundabout way of reaching our conclusion has one great advantage. It enables us to fix our principles of interpretation before they are applied to prophecy, the matter which immediately concerns us. Wherever any problem is to be solved in which strong prejudices or convictions are involved, it is always of the greatest assistance to an impartial judgment if the principles which must enter into the solution can be fixed before the attempt to apply them to the case in hand is made. If we can see these principles justified by their agreement with other principles in larger connections, or operating con-

vincingly in what may be termed neutral territory, we are less likely to balk at them when they are applied to a debatable matter.

VI

Before turning to the modern period it will be helpful to summarize the results thus far obtained. (1) One of the most important questions in the Early Church was the relationship of the Old Testament Scripture to the Gospel. This question was fundamental in the anti-Jewish polemic, in the defense of Christianity by the Greek Apologists, in the debate between the Old-Catholic theologians and the Gnostics and Marcionites. The Church maintained the thesis that the Old Testament was a Christian document and in this way sought to meet the difficulties raised by the Jews, by the philosophically educated Gentiles and by the heretics. (2) In the support of this thesis the argument from prophecy played the leading rôle. This argument was always considered to be the clincher in the debates. (3) In the conduct of the argument the Fathers laid the entire emphasis upon the predictive element in prophecy. It was the minute correspondences between prophecy and fulfilment in the life of Christ which guaranteed the unity of the two Testaments and thus established the typical character of the ceremonial, the very ancient and inspired character of the Christian religion, and the identity of the Messiah of the Old Testament with the Christ of the Gospels. (4) But the predictive element in prophecy could be vindicated to the extent which the Fathers claimed only when the historical meaning of the prophecies was denied. Not until they were spiritualized could they be conformed in the way desired to the New Testament ful-

filment. (5) This conformation was exegetically effected by the mystical or allegorical method of interpretation. (6) The adoption of this method by the Fathers was in no sense arbitrary. It was the scientific method of interpretation employed in those days to accommodate sacred books to the changes in intellectual conceptions and moral needs which had taken place since the books were originally written. The method had been used by the Greeks in their expositions of Homer, had been applied to the Old Testament by the Alexandrine Jews, and above all had been employed, in principle at least, by the New Testament writers themselves. (7) But though the adoption of the method by the Fathers was not arbitrary, the method itself was. It was an entirely unregulated method of exegesis, and, when taken by itself, proved inadequate to meet the attacks of the heretics. It turned the prophecies into enigmas and the correctness of the orthodox solution of the enigmas in the debate with the heretics could not be demonstrated. (8) In order to supplement the deficiencies of the allegorical method in debate, the Fathers were obliged to introduce the principle of ecclesiastical authority in the form of the unwritten tradition as the norm of interpretation. Exegesis must conform in its results to the Rule of Faith, as that was handed down by the succession of Bishops from the Apostles. (9) While the introduction of the unwritten tradition as the norm of interpretation was at first innocent enough and had a quasi-historical justification, it soon became the lever by which the authority of the Church was enabled to exalt itself above the Scriptures. The Scriptures are to be interpreted by the creed because the creed has been handed down from the Apostles. The creed can be trusted be-

cause it has been preserved uncontaminated by the succession of bishops. The bishops know best how to interpret the Scripture by the creed because they possess the charism of truth. The authority of their interpretation was also increased by the fact that they were in the way of becoming priests with the keys of salvation in their possession. Tradition ceased to be historical in any sense whatever and became dogmatic. The norm of interpretation was no longer an historical norm but a dogmatic norm. That was apostolic which was declared to be apostolic by the successors of the Apostles. (10) The final result was, that the argument from prophecy conducted by the allegorical method of exegesis became indissolubly united with the great dogmatic movements of the third, fourth and fifth centuries, and the Bible, which had been resolved by the allegory into a book of enigmas, became completely subjected to the creed as the law of the Church, or to the Pope as its Law-giver. One citation may be given that admirably sums up the course of the development which we have traced. It is taken from Vincentius of Lirinum who died about 445 A. D. Standing on the threshold of the Middle Ages, Vincentius's statement is prophetic of what was to come. "Since the perfect canon of Scripture is sufficient of itself and more than sufficient for all purposes, what need is there that the authority of the ecclesiastical understanding should be added to it? Because all people do not receive the Scripture on account of its elevation [observe the implication of the mysterious qualities which inhere in an inspired book] in one and the same sense, but its speech is interpreted by one in one way, by another in another, so that it appears that almost as many opinions can be derived from it as there

are men [obscurity of Scripture]. *Therefore it is necessary that the line of the prophetic and apostolic interpretation should be directed according to the norm of the ecclesiastical sense.*"

PART II

THE MODERN PERIOD

CHAPTER VI

THE SOLE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE AND THE REFORMATION PRINCIPLE OF EXEGESIS: LUTHER

I

In the first part of this sketch the attempt was made to show how the patristic argument from prophecy construed as prediction became indissolubly bound up with the development of ecclesiastical authority at the expense of the authority of Scripture. The connecting link between these two seemingly unrelated facts was the allegorical method of exegesis. On the one hand, by means of this method those correspondences between prediction and fulfilment were established which made the argument from prophecy so convincing to the Fathers and their contemporaries. The proof from prophecy construed as prediction could be successfully carried through only when the historical meaning of the prophecies was ignored, and they were compelled to

> suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange,

by being submerged into the warm, fancy-breeding floods of the allegory. On the other hand, when the historical meaning was denied, the interpretation of prophecy became uncertain. By the allegory the prophecies were turned into enigmas, the Old Testament into a book of enigmas, an Alice-in-Wonderland species of literature

which needed an interpreter. In order to regain the certainty of interpretation which had been lost through the defectiveness of the current exegetical method, the authority of the Church was introduced. The Scripture alone has always been theoretically the final authority, but the Scripture is obscure. The Church alone can tell what it means. By the assumption of the right to declare the true meaning of Scripture the Church was able to elevate its own authority for all practical purposes above that of the Scripture.

In this second part of our sketch it is proposed to begin where the first part left off, namely with the dogmatic problem involved in the Church's claim to be the sole interpreter of Scripture, then to point out how the allegory was rejected and a new principle of exegesis was introduced in order to reëstablish the sole authority of Scripture, not only theoretically but practically, and finally to consider the effect of this new principle upon the interpretation of prophecy construed as prediction. By this method of approach, it is hoped, can best be shown why it is that a new theory of prophecy must be substituted for the old, why it is that a new view of the authority of Scripture must be adopted, and therefore finally, why it is that the various Millennialist interpretations of prophecy cannot be accepted. It is only when the modern theory of prophecy is looked at in the wider perspective which I am here attempting to indicate that it is seen to be no accidental or arbitrary theory, but the logical and inevitable result of one of the profoundest developments in Christian doctrine, a development whose onward sweep is as irresistible as the flow of the Mississippi River, and which it is as idle to attempt to check as to dam that continental drain at its mouth.

II

The Middle Ages contributed no new points of view either for the doctrine or the interpretation of Scripture. The theologians of the Roman Catholic Church always did homage to the sole authority of Scripture, but it was only a lip-service. The real authority was the Church, the interpreter of Scripture, either through its creeds (so the conciliar theologians) or through the Pope (so the curialists). It was with the latter that Luther came first into conflict. The indulgence preachers were curialists and advocated papal infallibility in the crassest form, and Luther's reactions must always be viewed in the light of this fact. Priarias, the learned follower of Thomas Aquinas, with whom Luther carried on a very hot debate in 1518, actually went so far as to say that men must rely upon the doctrine of the Roman Church and the Roman pontiff "as the infallible rule of faith from which the Scripture derives its strength and authority," and again, that "the Roman Church is able to decree concerning faith and morals *by deed* as well as by word. . . . Hence for this reason custom has the force of law, because the will of a prince is permissively or effectively expressed by deeds"! This theory he applies to indulgences. "Whoever says of indulgences that the Roman Church cannot do that which as a matter of fact it does do, is a heretic!" The theory still is that the teachings of Scripture and of Tradition are the same, but Tradition is now manufactured not only by creedal formularies but by the custom of the Church. The development along this line could go no farther.

Meanwhile no advance had been made in exegetical method. In fact it became more and more arbitrary. There were also in this connection, it is true, theoretical statements which recognized the necessity of basing interpretation upon the literal sense as the foundation, but the thesis had little practical influence upon exegesis. How little may be seen in the fact that the literal sense is at times actually identified with the mystical sense! Gerson, for example, distinguishes between the letter which kills (2 Cor. 3:6) and the *sensus litteralis,* which is that which the Holy Spirit intends, and Faber Stapulensis distinguishes a twofold literal sense(!), "the one which the Jews gave to the words of a passage, the other which Paul and the Prophets and the Holy Spirit gave to them," in other words, the sense which the Old Testament had in itself and the sense which the New Testament gave to it. As a matter of fact the soil of the Middle Ages was especially adapted to the growth of the allegory. At a time when all sense for origins was lost, when even the original languages of Scripture were little known, and when the authority of the present Church usurped the place of its historical documents in men's minds, it is not to be wondered at that the allegory enjoyed the rankest sort of growth, and the Song of Songs became the favorite book for commentators to exercise their fancy upon. The threefold sense of Scripture proposed by Origen was now elaborated into a fourfold sense, the *quadriga* or four-in-hand, as Luther calls it, described in the popular couplet,

The *letter* teaches history; the *allegory* what is to be believed;
The *moral* what you are to do; the *anagoge* what hopes should be received.

Thus in the Middle Ages the tendencies which we saw operating in the Patristic Period, both in the sphere of the interpretation of Scripture and in the sphere of the enlarging authority of the Church at the expense of the authority of Scripture, worked themselves out to their logical conclusions, and the way was thus prepared for the great and decisive changes which were to be effected by the Reformation.

III

The issues in the Reformation period were absolutely different from those which engaged the attention of the Fathers of the first three centuries. The Messiahship of Jesus was not now at stake. The philosophical difficulties felt by intelligent Christians of those early times were no longer felt. Christianity was no longer something new under the sun. The ceremonial system of the Old Testament no longer gave offense to those who had become thoroughly imbued with the idea of a ceremonial Christianity in the Roman Church. The theosophical speculations of the early heretics had lost their meaning, and the unity of the two Testaments was accepted as a matter of course. The proof from prophecy construed as prediction, by which these early difficulties were met and solved, had lost any real significance. It might be retained as an ecclesiastical convention but it no longer had any living force. The issues were now grouped about two very different problems, the problem of salvation, and the problem of authority. In the life of Luther, more particularly in the development of his position during the Thesis controversy down to the Leipsic debate, these two great problems received their most classic formulation. The Reformation was born

in a great religious experience, the experience of salvation by faith without the intervention of priest or sacrament. The Church through all those centuries in which Tradition was being manufactured had developed into a vast sacramental apparatus of salvation. No one could be saved unless this complicated machinery was set in motion by the priest for the benefit of the sinner, and to avail himself of its benefit certain conditions must be met, certain things must first be done. Salvation had become in essence *salvation by works.* But Luther had found direct access to God through faith. He did not realize it at first, but the determining experience of his religious life meant the ultimate denial of the necessity of priestly mediation between the soul and its God. Salvation was for him a free gift — it was salvation by *faith.* The controversy over indulgences clarified Luther's views as to the real meaning of the experience through which he had passed. But the controversy had another and quite unlooked-for result. When Luther's new conception of religion led him more and more to criticize the various abuses of the Church, which had concentrated themselves in the doctrine of penance and indulgences, he was at once challenged by the champions of Church authority. Who was he to set up his personal experience against the teachings of the Catholic Church! In order to defend the validity of his experience Luther was obliged to wrestle with the problem of authority. In the debate on indulgences he was led step by step to reject the various forms in which Tradition had clothed itself. He began by rejecting the authority of the Schoolmen. This, to be sure, was not Tradition in the strict sense of the term, but it was none the less a real authority. He went on to reject the authority of the

Pope, the ecclesiastical canons, the Fathers, and finally and only after a serious struggle, the authority of the general councils themselves. The authority of the Scriptures, which had always been theoretically supreme in the Church, now became practically supreme. The Church was no longer to be the authentic interpreter of Scripture and thus by indirection usurp the throne of the Bible's sovereignty. The significance of the Thesis controversy is to be found in the removal of the various incrustations of ecclesiastical authority which had thickened around the authority of the Bible, until it was left freed and uncontaminated, the only rule of faith and practice.

But, as we have had occasion frequently to point out, to the reassertion of the sole and ultimate authority of Scripture the assertion of its perspicuity is a necessary corollary. An ambiguous authority is of no practical value whatever. Luther is therefore constantly emphasizing the perspicuity of Scripture. He gives an elaborate treatment of this subject in his two tracts on *The Goat at Leipsic,* addressed to Emser, and on *The Enslaved Will,* addressed to Erasmus. "If the Scripture is obscure," he says in the latter work, "which they (the Romanists) attempt to explain, who will certify us that their explanation is certain? Another new explanation. But who will explain that? So it goes on forever; I will have no part of it called obscure." The Holy Spirit, he says again, "is the simplest writer and speaker of all that is in heaven and earth."

But the Scripture is ambiguous so long as the allegorical method of exegesis is applied in interpreting it. This method turns the Bible into a picture puzzle. *Hence Luther found it necessary to discard the allegori-*

cal method if he was to reëstablish the Bible as a usable principle of authority. The difficulties in which we found Irenæus and Tertullian entangling themselves are now beginning to unravel. It is exceedingly interesting to trace the development of Luther's attitude toward the allegory, but the writer hopes to treat of this subject more at length elsewhere. It is sufficient for our purposes to note that while Luther's earliest works, especially his *Dictations on the Psalter,* show on every page the influence of the scholastic method of allegorical interpretation, he abandoned the method, in principle at least, even before he nailed up his theses. In a sermon dating early in 1517 he condemns those who would turn the Bible by means of the allegory into "a nose of wax" and speaks contemptuously of the "quadriga." In his exposition of Ps. 22 at a later date (1519–21) there occurs a passage in which the immediate connection between the allegorical method of exegesis and the establishment of Church authority, which I have tried to trace in the foregoing pages, is described in a most classical way and at the same time in a way very characteristic of Luther. Commenting upon v. 18, he draws an analogy between the Scriptures and Christ's garments:

"The truth of faith is wrapped up in Scripture as Christ is wrapped up in his clothes. But the garments were divided. So the simple meaning of Scripture is divided by the allegory into various senses. The apostles of the Pope began to spread through the world the fourfold sense of Scripture and so rent the garment of Christ, which became mere rags and tatters, which serve for the teaching of neither faith, nor hope nor morals. But beyond this division of the garment there is the casting of lots whose it should be. In this game the

Pope is prince. Others may investigate and dispute in Scripture, but without the Pope they can decide nothing conclusively. He plays with his fellow gamesters till the lot falls to him alone, and so the interpretation of Scripture comes into his sole power. The victory in this game has been so complete that the Pope is raised above Scripture. Through this gaming of the accursed Popes and sophists upon the seamless robe of Christ, the robe has become a mockery and an uncertain possession; for how will you teach faith with certainty when you make the sense of Scripture uncertain?"

Again and again Luther condemns Origen for giving so much attention to the spiritual (i.e. allegorical) sense. "It is dangerous; with it the Scripture goes under and one makes no really good theologian."

In place of the allegorical method Luther enunciated what may be called the great *Reformation Principle of Exegesis,* namely that the sense of Scripture was not threefold or fourfold but one, and that this was the grammatico-historical sense (*grammaticum historicum sensum*), as he himself calls it. By means of this principle of interpretation Luther was in position to restore the authority of Scripture, which had been rendered illusory through the allegory, and upon this authority to support the great reformation doctrine of justification by faith.

It is instructive to observe what a complete reversal had been effected in apologetics. With the change in the point of attack there is a corresponding change in the doctrinal emphasis and exegetical method. In the Early Church the Messiahship of Jesus was one of the main questions at issue. In the Reformation this was not discussed but assumed, while the question of author-

ity — Scripture or Tradition — was pushed to the front. In the Early Church the allegorical method of exegesis had been employed to defend the Messiahship of Jesus in the argument from prophecy. In the Reformation this method was abandoned and the grammatico-historical method was adopted to secure the perspicuity and therefore the practical authority of Scripture, upon the basis of which Luther's new apprehension of the meaning of salvation could be successfully defended. It thus becomes clear how the new issues in the Reformation period resulted in the enunciation of a new principle of interpretation and a new exegetical method. The consequences of the changed emphasis in doctrine and the changed principle of exegesis for the interpretation of prophecy were of fundamental importance. Two circumstances favored the free application of the new exegetical principle to prophecy. The first of these was the development of Humanism. It must be carefully observed that the adoption of the new principle was due to a dogmatic interest of the most compelling sort. But the principle itself was not a dogmatic principle. It was already made use of by Humanism, that great movement of thought manifesting itself primarily in historical research, which ran parallel with the Reformation. Through the adoption of the grammatico-historical principle of exegesis the Reformation became indissolubly connected with Humanism. It might not care to recognize this connection, but the connection existed none the less, and it could not be broken without Protestantism reverting to positions which it had abandoned. Now the great Humanist movement which lay back of the new exegetical method gave to it a force, a momentum, so to speak, which it might not otherwise have attained.

The new method was an expression not only of the dogmatic needs of the Reformers, but of the spirit of the age, and as such it had all the vital power in it which is always to be found in a great principle organically connected with the fundamental movements of human thought in any given period. In the second place, since the question of Jesus' Messiahship and the other questions which preoccupied the thoughts of the Fathers and which they attempted to answer by the allegorical method of exegesis were no longer at stake, the new exegetical principle was left free for a time to work out its logical results without being hampered unduly by dogmatic considerations, until a new issue was raised within Protestantism itself of which we shall speak later. We have now reached the decisive turning-point in our discussion. We have seen how a new principle of interpretation has been formally adopted in the Reformation period because of a great dogmatic exigency. We are now to observe the effects of the new principle upon the interpretation of prophecy. This can best be done by a study of Luther and above all of Calvin.

IV

The grammatico-historical method of exegesis means two things: (1) that a given verse in a prophecy can have but one meaning, (2) that this meaning must be discovered through a study of the historical situation which has given rise to the prophecy. The words of Luther in his Preface to Isaiah are of the utmost significance in this connection. "It is necessary," he says, "if one will understand the prophecy, to know how it stands in the land, what events transpired, what the peo-

ple thought, what the relationships were which they sustained to their neighbors, friends or foes, and especially what their attitude was toward their God and toward his Prophets." . . . It would not be difficult to show that the entire development of the modern criticism of the Prophets is implicit in this statement. Not only the political background, both within and without the land, is to be considered according to Luther, but also the religious condition of the people and even their psychology ("what the people thought"). Such a statement involves in its final analysis the attempt to reconstruct the ancient Semitic civilization out of which prophecy arose, exactly what the biblical research of the nineteenth century has tried to do. This program of Luther means, theoretically at least, a radical change in the attitude adopted toward prophecy from that held by the Fathers. They asked what a prophecy meant in the light of the New Testament fulfilment and the whole emphasis fell upon prediction. But in the above statement the emphasis begins to shift. The interpreter must ask himself what was the meaning of the prophecy in view of the historical situation out of which it arose.

But when we turn to the actual exegesis of Luther, its results at first sight are very disappointing. Luther was not an exegete so much as a homilist, and he did not rigidly apply his own exegetical principles in his interpretations of the Old Testament. He was in no sense a scientific interpreter. His interests were religious, not historical. At this point his sound exegetical theory was crossed by another principle which plays a fundamental part in all his interpretations of Scripture. This is his Christo-centric theory of Scripture. "Christ," he says, "is the point in the circle from which the whole

circle [of the Scripture] is drawn." . . . "If you will interpret well and surely, then take Christ with you, for he is the man whom the whole of [Scripture] concerns." In the Preface to his *German Commentary on Genesis* (1527) he combines both principles of interpretation, the grammatico-historical and the Christo-centric, in the following statement: "First, one must permit the Word to remain in its simple, straightforward sense; secondly, he must truly understand the Word and its *kernel* and feel it in his heart." The first is the scientific principle of exegesis; the second is his religious principle. The "kernel" which Luther here refers to is, as we know from innumerable passages, Christ. Because of the conviction that the Scripture is Christo-centric, the Old Testament is as much a Christian book for Luther as it was for the Fathers. In the same Preface to Genesis he proposes to select a book out of the Old Testament and interpret it as he had done in the New Testament, in order that every one may see how Scripture everywhere agrees, and how all examples and histories, indeed the entire Scripture through and through, leads to the recognition of Christ. In the tract, *How Christians are to accommodate themselves to Moses,* he tells us that of the three things which the reader is especially to mark in Moses, namely the fine examples of laws, the examples of faith in the lives of the Patriarchs and God's *promises* of Christ, the last "is almost the best in all of Moses." In accordance with these principles it is not surprising to find that Luther has taken over a large part of the patristic interpretation of prophecy.

V

The Psalms are thoroughly Christologized and the stock Messianic prophecies are adopted without scruple. Luther accepted Gen. 3:15 as the *protevangelium* with as little hesitation as any Father. Yet while the religious principle of interpretation seems at first sight to have negatived completely any fruitful results of his exegetical principle, this is not really the case. Luther's interpretation of the Old Testament generally and of prophecy in particular was after all fundamentally different from that of the Fathers. This is seen in two points. In the first place he does not look at the Old Testament under the categories of prophecy and fulfilment, but under the categories of Law and Gospel, though it cannot be denied, of course, that he found gospel in the Old Testament and law in the New Testament, as he himself tells us. Now this means that prophecy is not viewed by him as *proof*. He does not use the coincidences of prediction and fulfilment primarily for apologetic purposes. His interests are not along this line. Prophecy, with him, is simply the proclamation of the Gospel in the Old Testament. He does not interpret prophecy in order to make it correspond with events in Christ's life, but in order to deduce from it new illustrations of the Christian message of justification by faith. His expositions are for purposes of edification. When he discovers all of Christian theology in the prophecy of the seed of the woman, he does so, not in order to point out the marvel of the fulfilment in Jesus, but in order to emphasize the truth and beauty of Christian doctrine. Prophecy is not the proof of Christian doctrine but only an illustration of it. The Prophets do not furnish argu-

ments but texts for sermons on faith, etc. Thus the purpose of Christologizing the Old Testament and the use made of prophecy in this connection are entirely different in Luther's expositions from the patristic aims and uses. In the second place Luther was convinced that he could discover the entire body of Christian theology in the letter of the Old Testament and the letter of its prophecies. The exegesis by which he secures this astonishing result may often be as unconvincing to us as the ancient allegorical exegesis, nevertheless the difference between the two methods of arriving at the same result is world wide, and it is this difference which is after all the most significant thing at this stage of the development. One instance must suffice, but it is as good as a hundred to illustrate what has happened through the application of the new exegetical method. Commenting on Gen. 22:18 Luther says: "One must let this saying stand according to the history just as it sounds. They are poor weak words as you see, but God has a different way of speaking from that of men." Here is a recognition of the fact that the passage must be interpreted according to the letter and not allegorically. But afterwards he says of it that it is the chief saying in all of Moses and "it contains the whole of theology in one lump." He first takes up "that little word, seed," and seeks to prove that it must refer to Christ even though Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets and saints are also Abraham's seed, because no other has been confirmed by such miracles, and Christ also does the work of which the text speaks and is preached throughout the earth, which is true of no other seed. This line of argument recalls the patristic method. But further, everything which we believe of Christ is also

found in the text, his birth, passion, resurrection and ascension. "He must be born of a Virgin because all heathen are cursed and what is born of flesh is a child of wrath and death. But he cannot be born of flesh and blood, man and wife, because he is neither cursed nor blest, but *brings a blessing*. On the other hand he must be a man and have flesh and blood, for Scripture calls children "seed." Yet if he is to be a real child he must have a mother, for no one can be called a child who does not derive his existence from a mother. But if he is not to be under the curse he cannot be conceived in the natural way. Therefore it follows inevitably that the mother must be really pregnant and yet not pregnant by man. There is no other way than that he be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Again, all who are born of woman must be natural men and must die, and so must also this seed die. But if he is to bless *all the world,* in accordance with the text, he cannot remain corporeally on the earth or as king of Jerusalem rule all the world, for the kingdom is *too great*. If he is to reign as an actual presence he must exist in such a form that he can be with every one in every place. Therefore since he must live the life of a man on the earth, he must leave this form of existence and enter into an immortal spiritual existence if he is to rule in the heart of every one. Therefore, also, he must rise from the dead and be exalted to heaven and sit in the place where he can see all creatures and have power over all things. He must also be God, for if he is to give so great a blessing he must have the power to do it. Otherwise it would be a mockery, if he promised something and could not perform it. But since he promises to deliver us from death he must be omnipotent. But such power no one has but

God. Since this power is given to the seed he must unquestionably be true God and yet must remain seed, that is, he is both true God and man. Thus we have everything together in Christ — birth, death, resurrection and his eternal reign. Who could express all such things in such few words if the Holy Spirit himself did not speak them?" Examples of such expositions might be multiplied indefinitely out of the pages of Luther's exegetical works. The interesting thing about them is the naïve conviction that he is true to the simple historical sense of Scripture. Luther often consciously indulges in allegories for purposes of edification, though he never allows them any weight in argument, but he draws a sharp distinction between the allegory of the patristic type and such an exposition as the one just given. And there *is* a real difference. Once granted that the blessing in Gen. 22: 18 has a Christian content, Luther is able to draw his inferences as to the person of Christ by certain *logical* processes which, from his point of view, do not contradict the letter of the passage at all. It is clear from such an example that a literalistic interpretation may be just as unhistorical as an allegorical interpretation. The adoption of the principle that Scripture has but one sense, namely the grammatical sense, is not in itself sufficient. The sense must be the grammatico-*historical* sense, and Luther, the homilist and religious interpreter, is not usually interested in the latter half of this compound characterization of the new principle. In theory he admits the demand of historical interpretation that an inquiry should be made into what "the people thought," but in the example just cited this is not done.

But at two points his religious interest coincides in a

most interesting way with an approximately historical interpretation. The result is to rule out in principle two large domains in which the allegorical method had found numberless Messianic types. We have seen how Irenæus laid down the canon that where apparent immoralities in the Old Testament remained unrebuked, there we are to search for the type. The stories of the Patriarchs furnished abundant opportunity in this connection for allegorizing in a Messianic interest. But Luther's principle, laid down in his Preface to Genesis, that the lives of the holy Fathers are to furnish the reader with encouragements and warnings, permits him to adopt another mode of treating the patriarchal peccadilloes. True to his conviction that the Old Testament teaches Christ and faith in Christ, he assumes that the Patriarchs are Christians and their lives examples of the Christian virtue of faith. "We read Moses because of the beautiful examples of faith, of love and of the cross in the dear holy Fathers, Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, etc. . . . On the other hand we also see examples of unbelief on the part of the godless, and how God punishes Cain, Ishmael, Esau, etc." But the mercy of God is seen in forgiveness of sin, and the glory of faith is exhibited in its triumph over the weakness of the flesh. Hence in the interest of his doctrine of faith Luther is prepared to do justice to the historical meaning of the patriarchal narratives and admit the sins of the Patriarchs, for on the background of their sins their salvation through faith in the mercy of God can be depicted in brighter colors. In discussing the trick Rebecca and Jacob practiced upon Isaac, Luther takes great satisfaction in the fact that the mother and the son are flesh and blood like himself. Otherwise he would despair.

He even goes to the point of saying that he takes pleasure in "befouling them with sins as much as he can consistently with Scripture," for the grace of God is injured when we separate them from ourselves as far as heaven and earth are separated. . . . "They are bound in flesh and blood, in which I am bound, and from this fact we can gain hope and comfort. Otherwise we make demigods out of them and despise the grace of God." From this point of view Luther is ready to admit the sins of the Patriarchs, but only on the tacit condition that their faith be also admitted. And in his own ingenious way he is even able to interpret their sins many times as simply an exaggerated form of faith. Thus Abraham's lie (Genesis 12), which exposes his wife's honor to danger, and Sarah's obedience to the instruction of her husband, are both marks of faith. They trust God to deliver them. It is interesting to notice that in the *Latin Commentary on Genesis* (1536 ff), which was not begun till some nine years after the *German Commentary on Genesis* (1527), there is a notable difference. In the later work there is much less disposition to admit the sins of the Patriarchs and a proportionately more earnest attempt to construe their sins as marks of faith. A classical example of this is the treatment of Gen. 27 in the Latin commentary, where the faith of Rebecca and Jacob is illustrated by the terrible risk of Isaac's curse, which they were willing to run by their deception of him. They took this risk because they believed in the oracle of God which said that the elder should serve the younger. Similarly in the German commentary on the incest of Lot's daughters he will not excuse the Patriarch or his daughters, though they must have had faith, else they would not have been

saved (contrast their mother). The story is written as a warning that no one is so holy but that he may fall. Nature is the same in all, but so is grace. But in the Latin commentary he takes a much more conservative position. Lot sinned, but only venially. Neither his act nor that of his daughters is due to lust, but only to consternation. They were too terrified to know just what they were doing. In the case of the daughters it was wondrous solicitude for the preservation of the race that moved the holy maidens (an idea borrowed from the Fathers). But even in the later work there is as little disposition to allegorize as in the earlier work. In his comments on Gen. 30, which had always given such offense to an historical interpretation, he takes occasion formally and at length to reject the allegory. Thus Luther's religious interest in what he considers to be the faith of the Patriarchs leads him singularly enough to a fuller recognition of the historical meaning of the compromising narratives in Genesis than was usually admitted. But in proportion as this was done the necessity of interpreting them allegorically and Messianically was lessened.

But of far greater significance for the possible changes in the interpretation of prophecy which were to be effected by the new principle of exegesis was Luther's attitude toward the Law. We have seen how the Fathers turned the ceremonial law, to the letter of which they could do no sort of justice, into a great apparatus of Messianic types. This theory of the Law was completely broken down by Luther and the foundation laid for a thoroughgoing historical interpretation of it. It is at this point that we see most clearly what could be accomplished when an historical interpretation, made

possible by the new exegetical method, happened to coincide with Luther's great religious interests. Since Old Testament and New Testament as wholes must be construed in Luther's views as Law and Gospel, he holds that the Old Testament as Law is abrogated in the interest of the Gospel, which is the religion of grace and faith. The typical expression of the fact that the Old Testament is Law is found in the Mosaic Law. Accordingly Luther practiced what was for those times a truly startling criticism upon the Mosaic Law in the interest of his doctrine of faith. This criticism is found in the tract already referred to, *How Christians are to accommodate themselves to Moses,* and at even greater length in his work, *Against the Heavenly Prophets.* In these tracts he is meeting the position of men like Karlstadt and the Zwickau Prophets, who claimed that the Mosaic Law was still binding upon Christians. He says:

"This we will not stand. . . . We will not have Moses any longer as a law-giver, and God will not have him either. Moses was the law-giver of the Jewish people alone. The mouths of the Sectaries must be stopped. When they say, Moses says so, it is written in Moses, and so on, answer them: Moses has nothing to do with us. . . . Moses is dead; his rule is obsolete since Christ came. . . . Say to them: Go to the Jews with your Moses; I am no Jew; don't bother me with Moses."

Luther is not afraid to carry out the logical consequences of such a position. He holds that the decalogue itself is abrogated as Moses' law. Only in so far as it is the law of nature is it to be obeyed. But in its prohibition of images and in its sabbath law it is not a natural law but a ceremonial. Therefore these two laws are no

longer binding. In such criticisms we can see the far-reaching consequences of the new historical principle when the religious interests are enlisted in its application.

VI

To sum up the significance of Luther for the interpretation of prophecy: (1) First and foremost, his work is epoch-making in his resolute abandonment of the allegorical method of exegesis and his careful formulation of the theory of the grammatico-historical method. The importance of this accomplishment cannot be overestimated. It is the turning-point in the development which we have been following. For the first time in the history of the Church a really scientific principle of exegesis is enunciated as the controlling principle in interpretation. (2) Nevertheless the adoption of this scientific principle was not due to a scientific interest, but to a dogmatic interest. It was adopted in the interest of the perspicuity of the Bible, which is a necessary characteristic of the Bible if it is to be a workable authority, independent of ecclesiastical interpretation and of ecclesiastical authority. At this point the grammatico-historical method allies itself with the great Reformation principle of the right of private judgment. The Christian layman is now able to tell what the Scripture means and need not depend on the priest for its interpretation. (3) But since the new principle was adopted out of a dogmatic interest, it is not surprising to find that it was largely qualified in its application by the fundamental religious conviction of Luther that the Bible, throughout, teaches Christ. His Christo-centric theory of Scripture, by means of which all of it is utilized either

directly or indirectly to enforce the great doctrine of justification by faith, very often cancels the natural consequences of his scientific principle of exegesis. (4) At two points, however, this Christo-centric theory of Scripture reënforces the historical principle of exegesis in an interesting way and results in an entirely new appreciation of the historical meaning of the Scriptures. By a curious backwash it drove Luther to a recognition of the sins of the Patriarchs, which he made use of to inculcate his doctrine of faith. In a much more direct and conclusive way his aversion to a legalistic conception of religion led him to a thoroughgoing and historically true criticism of the Mosaic Law. *In both connections he adopted positions which freed him from the necessity of allegorizing large sections of the Old Testament, and thus paved the way for a denial of Messianic typology in these sections.* They did not have to be subsumed under prophecy in order to be fitted into Luther's theory of the Scriptures. (5) With regard to the interpretation of prophecy itself certain fundamental advances in principle were also made. The true theory of the interpretation of prophecy is clearly and classically stated in his Preface to Isaiah. The emphasis no longer falls upon the correspondence between prediction and fulfilment. Prophecy is not subsumed under apologetics but under homiletics. Not the marvel of prediction and fulfilment but the marvel of the Gospel in the Prophets is now emphasized. The proof from prophecy no longer has any real significance, since the issues of Luther's day were no longer the same as the issues in the Early Church. (6) Nevertheless the interpretation of prophecy was not advanced by Luther to any appreciable degree. His Christo-centric theory of Scripture

favored an unhistorical interpretation of it, and the value of his correct exegetical principle was largely nullified. By formulating a new and scientifically correct principle for the interpretation of prophecy and by finding another use for prophecy than to furnish arguments for the Messiahship of Jesus, Luther prepared the way for a new view of prophecy, but in his exegesis of the various prophecies he made little advance. For the real significance of Luther's principles we must look to the work of John Calvin.

CHAPTER VII

THE REFORMATION PRINCIPLE OF EXEGESIS AND THE INITIAL BREAKDOWN OF THE THEORY OF PREDICTIVE PROPHECY: CALVIN

I

CALVIN may not unfittingly be called the first scientific interpreter in the history of the Christian Church. As an exegete he is the acknowledged chief among the Reformers. Adopting the same principles of interpretation as Luther did, he consistently applied them in his commentaries as Luther did not. This is all the more astonishing as Calvin held many theological presuppositions which would have logically led to a complete abandonment of the historical meaning of the Old Testament in general and of prophecy in particular. The most astonishing difference between Luther and Calvin is that, whereas Luther's religious canon of interpretation, the Christo-centric theory of Scripture, dominated his exegetical method at every turn, Calvin's dogmatic theories of Scripture controlled his exegesis only to a limited extent. In the case of no great commentator is it more necessary to distinguish between the theologian and the exegete than in the case of Calvin. Because of the consistency with which he applied his exegetical method in spite of all the inducements of his own dogmatic theories to depart from it, his commentaries can still be read with profit.

Calvin published the first edition of his *Institutes* in

1536, nineteen years after the outbreak of the Thesis controversy in Germany. In this work his theories of the Bible are formulated. In 1539 he issued the second edition and at the same time published his first commentary, significantly enough, the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. In the dedicatory letter to this commentary, written to his friend Grynæus, Calvin gives fullest expression to his ideals of what a commentary should be. "We were both of this mind," he writes, "that the principal point of an interpreter did consist in a lucid brevity. And truly, seeing that this is in a manner his whole charge, namely *to show forth the mind of the writer whom he hath taken upon himself to expound,* look, by how much he leadeth the readers away from the same, by so much he is wide of the mark. . . . Verily the word of God ought to be so revered by us that through a diversity of interpretation it might not be drawn asunder by us, no not so much as a hair's breadth. . . . It is an audacity akin to sacrilege to use the Scriptures at our own pleasure and to play with them as with a tennis ball, which many before this have done." *To discover the mind of the writer* — that is the goal of the commentator. This cannot be done if the writer's statements are to be twisted to any conceivable meaning as was done by the allegorists. In his comments upon the various proof-texts urged by the Fathers out of the New Testament to support their allegorizing (cf. Gal. 4:21–26; 1 Cor. 9:9 and 10:1–13), Calvin regularly rejects their inferences. At Gal. 4:21–26 he protests against "the licentious system" of the allegory and points out the same tragic consequences of it which Luther had noticed. "For many centuries no man was considered to be ingenious who had not the skill and

daring necessary for changing into a variety of curious shapes the sacred words of God. This was undoubtedly a contrivance of Satan *to undermine the authority of Scripture* and to take away from the reading of it the true advantage." Calvin evidently has in mind here the connection between the allegory and ecclesiastical authority. He acknowledges that Scripture is "an inexhaustible fountain of all wisdom," but denies that "its fertility consists in the various meanings which man at his pleasure assigns to it." "The true meaning of Scripture is the natural and obvious meaning; let us embrace and abide by it *resolutely.*" At 1 Cor. 9:9 he says: "(Paul) did not mean to expound that precept allegorically, as some hair-brained spirits take occasion from this passage to turn everything into allegories. Thus they turn dogs into men, trees into angels and all Scripture into a laughing-stock." It is true that Calvin is often in danger of letting in allegory by the back-door of typology, as he does at 1 Cor. 10:1–13, yet even here he protests against the allegorizing of the Old Testament reference, as if it were not also to be construed as literal history. Thus the exegetical principle of the grammatico-historical sense is enunciated as clearly and forcibly by Calvin as by Luther, and in one particular Calvin's proclamation of it has even more significance than Luther's. Luther usually states this principle in his polemic against Rome, which took advantage of the allegory to usurp the office of interpretation. This connection is at times recognized by Calvin, but more often he is interested in the new method as a scientific instrument by which to probe the mind of the writer rather than as a polemical weapon. Luther used the principle as a sword with which to assail Rome; Calvin used it as

a plowshare with which to stir up the soil of Scripture left fallow for centuries, but from now on to grow harvests, some thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold.

II

But how far were these fine and true principles put into effect? Were they adhered to "resolutely" as Calvin said must be done, or did other and stronger interests paralyze them as so often happened in the case of Luther? It must candidly be admitted that Calvin's theory of the Old Testament was as unhistorical as Luther's. For him as well as for Luther it was essentially a Christian book, and the Old Testament worthies were Christian saints. In the *Institutes* his theory of the two Testaments is set down at length. The premise of it is found in the following statement: "The first step in piety is to know that God is our Father . . . but there can be no saving knowledge without Christ. Consequently, *from the beginning of the world* he has always been manifested to all the elect. . . ." From this premise it follows that "those persons whom God has adopted into the society of his people *from the beginning of the world* have been federally connected with him by the same law and the same doctrine which are in force amongst us. . . . The Fathers [Patriarchs] were partakers with us of the same inheritance and hoped for the same salvation through the grace of our common mediator." . . . The covenant of all the Fathers is so far from differing substantially from ours that it is the very same; it only varies in the administration" (a favorite formula of Calvin). The unity of the two Testaments is then pointed out in three par-

ticulars: (a) in the hopes of immortality cherished by the Old Testament worthies, (b) in the fact that the covenant with them was not founded upon merit, but upon the mercy of God, and (c) in the fact that they possessed and *knew* (!) Christ as the Mediator. Such statements inspire little confidence that Calvin will be able to adhere "resolutely" to his historical principle of exegesis. Nor are they greatly relieved by what he has to say on the differences between the two Testaments. He notes five main differences: (a) In the Old Testament the celestial inheritance was figured by terrestrial blessings, which is not the case in the New Testament. Thus he observes that possession or exclusion from the land of Canaan is "nearly the whole substance of the blessings and curses pronounced by Moses." But this very real difference between the two dispensations is obliterated by means of typology. The promises of earthly rewards are figures for the heavenly blessings. (b) The second difference is that between a ceremonial and a non-ceremonial religion. But again typology is introduced to cancel the distinction. The difference is not essential, it is one of administration, and the ceremonies are shadows of the things to come. At this point Calvin talks like one of the Greek Apologists or Origen. "For what," he says, "could be more vain and frivolous than for men to offer the fetid stench arising from the fat of cattle in order to reconcile themselves to God, or to resort to any aspersion of water or blood in order to cleanse themselves from pollution? In short, the whole legal worship, if it be considered in itself and if it contains no shadows or figures of correspondent truths, will appear utterly ridiculous. . . . God is a spirit and is pleased with

none but spiritual worship." Hence he concludes: "The Law is not irrespective of Christ." Here we have the premise of the patristic allegorizing of the ceremonial and the theoretical inference from it in so many words. (c) The third and fourth differences are summed up in the distinction between Law and Gospel. (d) The fifth difference is that between a nationalistic and a universal religion. "Till the advent of Christ the Lord selected one nation." Now Calvin has summed up in this analysis what really *are* the outstanding differences between the Old Testament and the New, the recognition of which would enable his correct exegetical method to work with freedom. But unfortunately after conceding these differences, he turns around and cancels the value of everything he has admitted by introducing typology. The religion of the two Testaments is after all the same; there is a difference only in the administration. It only remained for Calvin to introduce the type into the history of Israel as well as into its laws to round out the typologizing of the Old Testament. This he does unhesitatingly. "Both in the posterity of David and in the whole Levitical tribe, as in a twofold mirror, Christ was exhibited to the view of the ancient people." In these views of Calvin it would seem as if we were being led straight back to our starting point, and the various approaches to a more historical valuation of the Old Testament which Luther had opened up would be blocked again. Yet there is one qualification, and it is an important one, to be made even of Calvin's theory of the Old Testament. He drew a sharp distinction between typology and allegory. By the allegory he usually understood Origen's extremer view of it, according to which the

letter often had no meaning whatever. Calvin always held to the reality of the letter. Further, and this is most symptomatic of the healthy influence of the new exegetical principle, whenever he pointed out the typical significance of the letter he maintained at the same time that *the Israelites themselves understood the meaning of the types.* They understood the symbolism of the promised land. "In the earthly possession which they enjoyed they contemplated as in a mirror the future inheritance which they believed to be prepared for them in heaven." They understood also the Christian symbolism of the ceremonial. "Their sacraments served to prefigure ours in such a way that they were *even for that time true sacraments.* Those who at that time made the right use both of doctrine and signs were endowed with the same spirit of faith with which we are endowed." This consistent demand that the Fathers themselves should understand the types shows how far Calvin really is, even in his theories, from the enigma view of the Old Testament. At the same time his theories, as laid down principally in the *Institutes,* are most dangerous to any real historical appreciation of the Old Testament. But what of Calvin's exegesis itself? Did it carry his theories into effect?

III

Calvin regularly admits, with pain admits, the sins of the Patriarchs. Since in theory he regarded the historical events of the Old Testament as typical, it might have been supposed that he would explain away their sins as holy mysteries, but he does not do so. The drunkenness of Noah is not excused but is made the

text of a sermon on temperance. The lies of the Patriarchs are regularly regarded as evidences of weakness of faith, not of a daring faith such as Luther held. Calvin does his best, it is true, to divert the attention of the reader from this unpleasant subject and to point to those elements in the patriarchal stories which seem to him to set the Patriarchs in a better light, but when he is directly confronted by their lies he does not blink the facts. At Gen. 12 he states very honestly the difficulties involved in Abraham's willingness to sacrifice the honor of his wife and in the deceitfulness of his stratagem. But since it is plain from the life of Abraham, viewed as a whole, that he was actuated by good motives, Abraham could not have been moved in the present case by a selfish fear, but only by the fear that God's purpose for him would be defeated. Abraham's aim was right but he erred in the method of securing it. The lie was evidence of a lack of faith. When Abraham tries the same trick again (Gen. 20) he receives a sharper censure. "It is impossible to excuse his gross negligence in not calling to mind that he had once before tempted God." For the same reason Isaac is also "inexcusable" (Gen. 26:7). The deceit of Jacob and Rebecca (Gen. 26) is palliated as far as possible. The risks which mother and son were willing to take showed their faith (compare Luther). On the other hand Rebecca "darkens the celestial oracle by her lie," and Jacob "bears the blame of rashness in that he was distrustful of the providence of God and fraudulently gained possession of his father's blessing." Calvin seeks to throw the blame for Jacob's polygamy on Laban as far as possible, yet "cannot altogether absolve Jacob from blame," and he warns against imitating the

example of the Fathers in all cases, rather than following the law of God. The domestic broils of Gen. 30 occasion Calvin many qualms. They must be a punishment, because Jacob "had been guilty of no light sin in marrying two wives and especially two sisters." At v. 30, he says, "It is wonderful that God should have deigned to honor an adulterous connexion with offspring (Bilhah might better have been called a harlot than a wife), but he sometimes strives thus to overcome by kindness the wickedness of men!" At v. 14, he admits that the story "has the appearance of being mean and puerile," but finds a purpose in it in the suggestion that it was placed here to humble the pride of the Jews, who sprang from a beginning so mean and abject. The stratagem of Jacob at v. 37 is expressly defended because he adopted it at the command of God. Calvin always feels on safe ground when he thinks he can introduce a command of God into the explanation, for, of course, no one dares to cavil at the divine will (a thoroughly Occamistic line of thought). . . . It is clear from the foregoing illustrations that in the question of the morals of the Patriarchs Calvin's theories of typology are not sufficient to offset the historical meaning of the narratives when it comes to their actual exegesis. The Reformation principle of exegesis acts even more freely at this point in Calvin's interpretation than in Luther's.

The contrast between dogmatic theory and exegetical practice is even more strikingly illustrated in Calvin's treatment of the Mosaic Law. According to the theory, the forms and ceremonies, the material rewards and punishments, etc., are all types. The theory would therefore justify an almost unlimited mystical exegesis of

the details. But as a matter of fact the recognition of the type is almost entirely confined to general statements, and the actual exegesis has little to do with it. There can be little doubt, I think, that a commentary on the Levitical law was a distinctly distasteful business to Calvin, though he did not shirk his task. But the ingenious way in which he seeks to avoid the difficulties of it shows how irksome it was to him. Calvin wrote a harmony of the Pentateuch in which he undertook to analyze and classify the various laws. The contents of the four books, Exodus-Deuteronomy, are grouped under two main heads, Doctrine and History. The doctrinal contents are again subsumed under four heads: (1) The Prefaces to the various laws, under which the statements relating to their dignity are grouped, (2) the Decalogue, or the summary of the rule of a just and holy life, (3) the Supplements to the Decalogue, namely (a) the *ceremonialia,* which are subsumed under the first table, and (b) the *judicialia,* or civil laws, which are subsumed under the second table, and finally, (4) the statements as to the ends and use of the Law, under which are also comprised its sanctions, the rewards and punishments. All of these lead up to Christ, who is the end of the Law. Now the interesting thing about this analysis is that the *ceremonialia* and *judicialia,* which give the gravest difficulty to the dogmatic as distinct from the historical view of the Bible, are grouped under the two tables of the Decalogue. "In fine they are *appendages,* which add not the smallest degree of completeness to the Law, but whose object is to retain the pious in the spiritual worship of God, which consists in faith and repentance. . . . As to political ordinances, obviously nothing will be found in them which at all adds to the perfection of the

second table." By thus grouping these laws under the Decalogue Calvin accomplishes two things. On the one hand he is able to impart to them the moral meaning of the Decalogue; they are now protected, so to speak, by its sanctity. On the other hand, since they really add nothing to the meaning of the Decalogue, since they are merely *appendages,* Calvin can relieve himself of the necessity of any exhaustive and detailed discussion of them. By this means the sharp contrast between his exegetical method and his dogmatic theory in the treatment of the laws is avoided to a very considerable extent.

The food laws, for example (Lev. 11; Dt. 14), are subsumed under the first table. They are "exercises in the worship of God." By means of them purity was to be cultivated. Thus Calvin looks upon these laws from the point of view of discipline. But if the purpose of the food laws is restrictive and disciplinary, difficulty arises with the prohibition of those animals which no one would be tempted to eat. This is the difficulty which Origen felt and from which he argued that the laws must be allegorized. But not so Calvin. "Because men's greediness sometimes delights in monstrous food, God desired even in minor matters to put the rein upon them lest they should rush with heathen nations into intemperance. . . ." One may think of the satisfactoriness of this explanation what one pleases; as an example of the way Calvin reacted from the allegory it is most significant. Again he stumbles at the view that if a mouse should be drowned in a vessel of water the vessel itself would be unclean, "as if spiritual infection reached even to things without life," but he does not allegorize. The law is due simply to the will of God, who wishes to culti-

vate in the people a study of purity. This treatment of the food laws stands in the most striking contrast to the invariable allegorizing of these laws by the Fathers. Once, it is true, Calvin in an apologetic way borrows a patristic interpretation. On Lev. 11:3, he says, "Whilst I fear but little confidence can be placed in the allegories in which many take delight, I do not find fault with that which has been handed down from the ancients, namely, that by cleaving the hoof is signified prudence in distinguishing the mysteries of Scripture, and by chewing the cud the serious meditation on its heavenly doctrines, although I cannot approve of the subtlety which they add, namely, that those rightly divide the word who know how to elicit the mystical sense from the letter." In these words Calvin rejects explicitly the allegorical method while in the midst of allegorizing!

Calvin's eagerness to seize on Lev. 11:44 at the end of his treatment of the food laws, and, with this as a text, to exhort to a spiritual worship of God and to warn against reliance upon ceremonialism, is in striking contrast to the scrupulous and painful minuteness of the preceding laws. It testifies to Calvin's instinctive antagonism to them and thus serves to throw his general abstention from allegorizing into all the stronger relief. The laws on leprosy (Lev. 13 and 14) occupy 116 verses and usually afforded abundant opportunity to allegorize. Calvin's sobriety here is again most exemplary. At the outset he rejects both the allegorical and the sanitary explanation of the laws and seeks to explain them again simply as an exercise in purity. His typologizing is of the mildest sort. The same may be said of his treatment of Lev. 16. He does not even mention the patristic interpretation of the two goats as symbols of the

two covenants. He subsumes the laws regarding the erection of the tabernacle (Ex. 26f) under the second command of the first table. While he holds that the tabernacle is a type of the Church he avoids the temptation to allegorize its details. After pointing out some very general analogies between the tabernacle and the Church, he continues, "I now descend to particulars, in which let not my readers expect of me any conceits which may gratify their ears. . . . It would be puerile to make a collection of minutiæ wherewith some philosophize, since it was by no means the intention of God to include mysteries in every hook and loop, and, even although no parts were without a mystical meaning, which no one in his senses will admit, it is better to confess ignorance than to indulge in frivolous conjectures." He then refers to the sobriety with which the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers to this subject. Nothing could better illustrate the healthy exegetical sense with which Calvin approached such discussions. His position in his exegesis of Numbers 19 (the red heifer) is similar. While typologizing somewhat, he says, "Those who speculate subtilely on details advance some questionable matters. I leave them therefore to the enjoyment of their conceits; let it suffice for us to consider generally what God referred to in this ceremony." He denies that the red color of the heifer symbolized sin. It was probably chosen as a common color. We have already seen how the materialistic blessings and cursings (cf. Lev. 26 and Dt. 28) were regarded by Calvin as types of spiritual rewards and punishments, though even so the letter of them was not denied. But beyond this general analogy he makes no attempt to explain the details in these chapters in a mystical sense. Everywhere we meet the

same phenomenon. The general type is urged but little, or no attempt is made to find a mystical meaning in the mass of legal details. Thus while Calvin satisfies his theological presuppositions by his theoretical assumption of the type, he usually keeps true to his exegetical conscience by refraining from any attempt to carry out his typology in detail.

This is a fundamentally inconsistent position, and Calvin, at least in one remark, seems to be conscious of its difficulty. In his comment upon 1 Cor. 10:1 ff., a passage which he utilized to justify typology, he says: "It is, however, objected that we do not find a word of all this [typological meaning]. This I admit; but there is no doubt that God by his Spirit supplied the want of outward preaching, as we may see in the instance of the brazen serpent, which was, as Christ himself testifies, a spiritual sacrament. And yet not a word has come down to us as to this thing, but the Lord revealed to believers of that age in the manner he thought fit, the secret which would otherwise have remained hid." This passage is a remarkable evidence of the sound historical instinct of Calvin, which demanded that the Fathers themselves should understand the type, and at the same time, of his keen observation that nowhere in the Old Testament is any supposed type explained, a fact which typologists would do well to ponder. Calvin's method of reconciling his dogmatic theory and his exegesis is a pure guess and a pretty lame one at that.

Calvin's attitude toward the morals of the Patriarchs and toward the dogmatically indigestible mass of primitive law has been examined at such length because, though it is subsidiary to our main argument, it nevertheless illustrates in a striking way how, almost uncon-

sciously, the new exegetical principle was restricting the sphere in which Messianic prophecy could be conveniently discovered. The great apparatus of Messianic typology was there in theory. The premises of the mystical exegesis were there. But in the explanation of details the new principle of exegesis asserted itself, and consequently the usual flood of mystical interpretation is dammed, till only a tiny rivulet still trickles through Calvin's commentaries.

But when we turn to what is usually considered Messianic prophecy in the more immediate sense of that term, the contrast between Calvin's interpretation and anything that has gone before is truly astonishing. Not only, as in the case of Luther, has the argument from prophecy, construed as prediction, ceased to have any real significance, a most important fact, but the exegesis by which the argument can be successfully carried through has now been in principle completely broken down.

In the first place Calvin regularly seeks to discover the historical background of the so-called Messianic Psalms, which the Fathers and also Luther referred without hesitation directly to Christ. The historical background of Ps. 2 is David's reign. The favorite interpretation of v. 7 of the eternal generation of the Son is expressly rejected. Ps. 22 also finds its historical background in David's misfortunes. On v. 16 Calvin observes: "If they object that David was never nailed to a cross (compare the argument of Justin above p. 46), the answer is easy, namely, that in bewailing his condition he made use of a metaphor (*metaphorice conquestum*)." Similarly he speaks of the parting of the garments as metaphorical (*translatitium*). These expositions are of special interest as the verses had always

been interpreted exclusively of Christ. Ps. 45 is explained of Solomon's marriage with the Egyptian Princess, though with the qualification that, "under what is said of Solomon as a type, the holy and divine union of Christ and his Church is set forth." Ps. 47, 96 and 99 are all interpreted typically of Christ's Kingdom, but there is no attempt to give them a personal Messianic reference by construing Jehovah as the Messiah after patristic fashion, and the absolute silence at Ps. 96: 10 on the LXX addition, "from the wood," is significant. Ps. 24 is explained of Jehovah and the temple. Calvin argues "from the natural sense of the words" against the error of the Papists, who refer the psalm to Christ "knocking at the gates of the infernal regions." On Ps. 72 Calvin says expressly, "Those who would interpret it simply as a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ seem to twist the words too violently. And then we must always beware of giving the Jews an occasion of making an outcry, as if it were our purpose sophistically to apply to Christ those things which do not directly refer to him." Thus in all these psalms Calvin bases his exposition on the historical background; he arrives at a Messianic reference only indirectly through typology. In this respect his exposition of the Psalms is in exact agreement with his exposition of the ceremonial law. In both, his dogmatic interest is in the type, but his exegetical interest is in the historical meaning of a given passage. The shift of the interest is due to the subtle influence of the new principle of exegesis. As Calvin searched for a historical background in the Psalms, so he did in the prophecies proper. As conclusive instances may be mentioned Is. 9: 1–7 and chaps. 40 ff. He holds that the deliverance promised in both

these prophecies was primarily from the Babylonian exile. The inference which Criticism was to draw from this observation as to their date was ultimately inevitable.

In the second place exegetical and historical reasons led Calvin to reject absolutely some of the Messianic interpretations which had the support of a hoary tradition behind them and were most confidently accepted. Thus he denies that the seed of the woman in Gen. 3:15 is to be interpreted of the personal Messiah on the very just exegetical ground that "a collective noun cannot be understood of one man only." Luther, in his German commentary, had said without qualification, "The seed is Christ." Gen. 49:10 is Messianic, though Christians have here "betrayed some excess of fervor in their pious diligence to set forth the glory of Christ," but v. 11 is correctly explained as a description of the fruitfulness of the territory which fell to Judah, and Calvin purposely "abstains from those allegories which to some appear plausible" [he is alluding to the fanciful explanations to be found in Justin or Tertullian], as he does not "choose to sport with such great mysteries of God." On Is. 4:2, Calvin observes, "After a careful examination of the whole I do not hesitate to regard the branch of God and fruit of the earth as denoting an universal and abundant supply of grace. . . . They who limit it [the branch] to the person of Christ expose themselves to the ridicule of the Jews, as if it were in consequence of scarcity that they tortured Scripture for their own convenience." The LXX reading at Is. 3:10 (Let us bind the just man for he is displeasing to us), a favorite prophecy of the passion in the patristic interpretation, is passed over in silence. The patristic interpretation of Is. 8:1–4 (cf. above p. 45) is "a pleasing enough

ingenuity but can not at all harmonize with the context." At Is. 63:1, Calvin says, "This chapter has been violently distorted by Christians, as if what is here said related to Christ, whereas the prophet speaks simply of God himself." At Hos. 6:2, he rejects both the Jewish Messianic interpretation and also the Christian, which explained the verse of Christ's resurrection on the third day. "This sense seems to me rather too refined. We must always mind this, that we fly not in the air. Subtle speculations please at first sight but afterwards vanish. Let every one, then, who desires to become proficient in the Scriptures always keep to this rule, to gather from the Prophets and Apostles only what is solid."

The examples already given would be quite sufficient to show how powerfully the Reformation principle of the grammatico-historical sense was affecting the interpretation of prophecy, but the reach of this new principle is exhibited in the third place, even more clearly and in a more startling manner, in the attitude which Calvin assumed toward the New Testament method of prophetic citations. It had hitherto been taken for granted that the New Testament use of a passage cited from the Old Testament determined its meaning. We have already seen how the Fathers sought to justify their allegorizing of the Old Testament by pointing to the example of the New Testament writers. But the appeal to a New Testament writer as the final authority for the settlement of the meaning of an Old Testament passage is in reality to forsake exegesis for dogma. That is to say, the meaning of an Old Testament passage is no longer determined upon exegetical principles — the grammar, the context, the historical background — but by the dec-

laration as to what it means by the New Testament writer, the assumption being that such a writer, as an inspired man, is entirely competent to decide upon the meaning, and back of his authority there is no right nor necessity to go. (The point will be discussed more at length hereafter.) But when a serious attempt was made to interpret the Old Testament Prophets exegetically, and not dogmatically, that is, upon the principles laid down by Luther in his Preface to Isaiah, it was soon discovered that the meaning which was given in the New Testament to many, if not all, of the prophecies could not possibly have been their original, historical meaning. It is interesting to notice how frequently Calvin says that the Evangelists seem to twist (*torquere*) the Prophets, though he never admits that they *really* do so. The admission of the appearance of evil was forced from Calvin by his exegetical conscience; the denial of its reality by his dogmatic presuppositions. The question arose, and it was a most poignant one,— Was the Reformation principle of exegesis to be qualified in order to avoid the dogmatic difficulty raised by the New Testament method of citation? It is at this point more than anywhere else that Calvin showed his candor as an exegete. He refused to allow the New Testament to determine the historical sense of an Old Testament passage. Not that at times he did not yield to the pressure of the dogmatic interest, as for example in his treatment of Is. 7: 14, which must have given his exegetical conscience some very painful twinges, but the amazing thing is that, with the very high inspiration theory which he maintained and with his theory of the unity of the two Testaments, he allowed himself to be influenced so little in his interpretation of the Old Testament by the New Testament method of

citation. But can the positions of the dogmatic theologian and the historical interpreter at this point be reconciled? Can Calvin make the exegetical admissions which he does and remain true to form? As his position on this point is of fundamental importance to our discussion it merits an ample illustration.

There are some statements of Calvin, it is true, which seem to indicate the very opposite of the contention that he refused to make the New Testament interpretation normative for Old Testament exegesis. At Is. 28:16 he prefers one of several interpretations, "both because that meaning agrees best with the context and because it is supported by the authority of the Apostle Paul." "I do acknowledge," he continues, "that the Apostles followed the Greek translation and used such liberty that, while they were satisfied with giving the meaning, they did not quote the exact words. Yet they never change the meaning, but, taking care to have it properly applied, they gave the true and genuine interpretation. Whenever, therefore, they quote any passage from the Old Testament, they closely adhere to its object and design." Again at 1 Cor. 2:9 (Is. 64:4) he rejects one exposition, though it "appears at first view to suit better the Prophet's context in respect of the verb, [because] it is farther removed from Paul's meaning, on which we ought to place more dependence than on any other consideration. For where shall we find a surer or more faithful interpreter of this authoritative declaration which (the Spirit) himself dictated to Isaiah, than the Spirit of God in the exposition which he furnished by the mouth of Paul?" This statement lays down in so many words the principles which were later to become all-controlling. Yet in spite of it Calvin himself

does not alter the historical meaning of the passage in Isaiah, but only seeks to show how it is in harmony with Paul's citation. So much for Calvin's thesis! But observe how he departs from his own thesis, or at least from the inferences which we might naturally suppose followed from it. On Mt. 2:15 (Hosea 11:1) Calvin observes: "They who have not been well versed in Scripture confidently applied this place to Christ; yet the context is opposed to this." The passage is then correctly explained of the Exodus. On the other hand he contends that it is only scoffers who say that the Evangelist has misapplied the passage (Commentary on Hosea). "It is skillfully accommodated (*aptatur*) to the matter in hand" (Commentary on Matthew). The explanation offered is that Hos. 11:1 is a prohetic "analogy." "God begat the Church anew in the person of Christ. Then did the Church come out of Egypt in its head as the whole body had been formerly brought out" (Commentary on Matthew). This means that Hos. 11:1 is not a prediction in the proper sense of the word, but the Exodus referred to in it has a typical significance. The distinction between type and prediction is recognized by Calvin himself in his statements on Mt. 2:18 (Jer. 31, 15), which are even more uncompromising. "It is certain that the destruction of the tribe of Benjamin which happened in his own time was described by the Prophet. . . . Since the vaticination of the Prophet was then [i.e. in Jeremiah's time] fulfilled, Matthew does not mean that it was here predicted what Herod would do, but that, by the advent of Christ, that mourning was renewed which the Benjaminites had endured many ages before (Commentary on Matthew)." The passage in his Commentary on Jeremiah is even more

unequivocal. Matthew "meant no other thing than that the same thing happened at the coming of Christ as had taken place *before,* when the whole country was reduced to desolation. . . . To no purpose, then, do interpreters torture themselves by explaining this passage [in Jeremiah] allegorically, for Matthew did not intend to lessen the authority of *ancient history* (!) *for he* knew in what sense this had been formerly fulfilled. But his only object was to remind the Jews that there was no cause for them to be greatly astonished at that slaughter [namely of the Innocents], for the region had *formerly* been laid waste and bereaved of its inhabitants. We now see how Matthew accommodated this passage to his own purpose." Here there is not only no prediction but the type itself is almost washed out. In such an exposition the ἵνα πληρωθῇ (in order that it might be fulfilled) of Matthew receives an extension of meaning sufficient to relieve any difficulty which might arise out of the Evangelist's citations, but at the same time the proof from the minute fulfilment of specific predictions, so far as this prophecy is concerned, is completely broken down. And if the phrase, ἵνα πληρωθῇ, is capable of being so toned down in one instance, why may it not be in others? It would be difficult to prove, however, that Matthew attached any such elastic sense to his phrase, either here or anywhere else, as Calvin's exposition demands for it. Calvin's lengthy discussion of the difficult case, Mt. 2:6 (Mic. 5:2), is also instructive. He notices the difference between the Hebrew and the LXX text of the Micah passage and that Matthew follows the latter. He lays down the general proposition that, "It ought always to be observed whenever any proof from Scripture is quoted by the Apostles, that, though they do not translate

word for word and sometimes depart widely from the language (!), yet it is applied correctly and appropriately to their subject. Let the reader always consider the purpose for which passages of Scripture are brought forward by the Evangelists, so as not to stick too closely to the particular words, but to be satisfied with the fact that the Evangelists never torture Scripture into a different meaning, but apply it correctly in its native meaning." So much for a sop to his theory! "But," he continues, "there is nothing to prevent the children of God from making careful and diligent inquiry into the meaning of Scripture and thus being led to the fountain by the taste which the Apostles afford." If this means anything at all it means that we are not to rest content simply with the apostolic method of citation, which is only a taste, but to go to the original meaning of the Old Testament passage, the fountain. Taking advantage of this permission Calvin proceeds to note the difference between Matthew and Micah. "The Prophet says that Bethlehem is little when reckoned among the governments of Judah, while Matthew, on the contrary, speaks highly of its rank as one of the most distinguished." He then rejects the attempt to harmonize the two passages by reading the verse in Micah as a question (compare also the differences between the A. V. and R. V.). Calvin holds that Matthew's "change of language" (!) "magnified the grace of God in making an inconsiderable town . . . the birth-place of the highest king. Although Bethlehem received this distinguished honor, it was of no advantage to its inhabitants, but brought upon them a heavier destruction" (Commentary on Matthew). Thus in one and the same passage we have first the proposition that the Evangelist

applies the Old Testament citation in its "native meaning," and immediately afterward the suggestion that the Apostles after all afford only a taste of the meaning, and that we are permitted, therefore, to go to the fountain-head for a deeper drink. Further, his theory does not prevent him from admitting in the detailed discussion of the passion an actual difference between Matthew and Micah, and his own explanation of the difference clearly reveals that Matthew does not give the "native meaning" of Micah, for the Prophet, on Calvin's own showing, is speaking of the humiliation of Bethlehem as a town, whereas Matthew speaks of its exaltation as the birth-place of the Redeemer. But this explanation only shows that the two passages *do not contradict* each other, because they refer to two different things. It does not prove that they mean the same thing but quite the contrary. In the Commentary on Micah he says of the same passage: "As Matthew quotes this passage differently some think it ought to be read as a question. . . . But what need is there of *distorting* the words of the Prophet, as it was not the design of the Evangelist to relate the expressions of the Prophet, but only to point out the passage. As to the words, Matthew had regard to the state of the town as it was at the coming of Christ, when it began to be eminent; but the prophet represents how ignoble and mean a place Bethlehem *then* [in Micah's time] was.". . . Here Calvin recognizes without qualification that the two passages differ and at the same time denies the admissibility of interpreting Micah by Matthew. It *distorts* the words to bring them into harmony with Matthew by interpreting them as a question. The inconsequences of Calvin in such passages as these testify most strikingly to the difficulties into

which his exegetical principle was leading him. The frankness with which Calvin admits differences between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament citation is again well illustrated in his comment on Mt. 8:17 (Is. 53:4). "This prediction has the appearance of being cited inappropriately *(videtur parum apposite citari)* and even of being twisted (*torqueri*) into a foreign sense *(alienum sensum)*. For Isaiah does not speak here of miracles but of the death of Christ, and not of temporal benefits but of spiritual grace. Now what is undoubtedly spoken about the impurities of the soul Matthew applies to bodily diseases." In this statement one of the difficulties, at least, in this citation is most tersely and lucidly expressed. Calvin seeks to justify Matthew's use of the prophecy by pointing to the purpose for which Christ healed diseases. His healing of the physical ailments was symbolic of his power to heal spiritual diseases. "He gave life to the blind in order to show that he was the light of the world," etc. Here the resort is to the type again, but this does no sort of justice to the "in order that it might be fulfilled" with which Matthew introduces the citation. At Is. 8:18 (Heb. 2:13) Calvin notices that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies the passage to Christ; nevertheless our commentator interprets it properly of Isaiah and his children. At Ps. 40:6–9 (Heb. 10:5) the New Testament writer seems to Calvin to twist the passage, "since he restricts what is spoken of *all the elect* to Christ alone." In both these last mentioned instances Calvin's refuge is in typology. At Ps. 8:5 (Heb. 2:7) he will not translate *Elohim* by "angels," although it is so translated by the writer of Hebrews following the LXX, but he will adhere to the translation "God,"

as that "seems more natural *(genuina)* and as it is almost universally adopted by Jewish commentators." He then points out very clearly the great difficulty in the application of this verse in Hebrews. "While the Psalmist here discourses concerning the *excellency* of men and describes them in respect of this as coming near to God, the Apostle applies the passage to the *humiliation* of Christ." His comment upon this is as follows: "What the Apostle says in this passage [Heb. 2:7] concerning the abasement of Christ *is not an explanation* [of the text], but by way of enriching the subject he turns to his own purpose what was spoken *in a different sense (non est exegeticum sed* κατ' ἐπεξεργασίαν *ad suum institutum deflectit quod alio sensu dictum fuerat)*. For Paul did not hesitate at Rom. 10:6 in the same manner to embellish the words of Moses in Dt. 30:12 [a very happy comparison, though in his earlier Commentary on Romans Calvin hedged somewhat on this passage]. The Apostle, therefore, in quoting this psalm had not so much an eye to what David meant, but, making an allusion to the words, . . . applies this (diminution) to the death of Christ and that (glory) to his resurrection." This is practically an admission that the writer of Hebrews uses the words of an Old Testament passage simply to adorn his page and without scrupling to preserve the original meaning. This same admission is found in his comment upon Paul's use of Ps. 68:18 at Eph. 4:8, in which "he does not so much explain the meaning of the text as by a pious turn accommodates it to the person of Christ (*non tam interpretatur quam pia deflexione ad Christi personam accomodat*)." A franker recognition that the Apostle does not give the historical meaning of the words could

not be made. Yet at the beginning of his exposition of Ps. 8:6 Calvin maintains that the Apostles did not "twist" the words of the Old Testament to a foreign sense!

IV

From the foregoing illustrations of Calvin's attitude toward the Old Testament in general and to prophecy in particular we may make the following deductions. In his general attitude toward the Old Testament he works out an elaborate theory of typology in conscious antagonism to what he considers to be the mistakes of the allegory. By this theory he seeks to do justice to his dogmatic presuppositions with regard to the Old Testament on the one hand and to the Reformation principle of exegesis on the other. In all his typologizing he is interested to maintain the reality of the literal and historical meaning of any given passage. This is the starting-point. But the principles which enter into the law or into the event construed historically are held by him to be capable of a larger application. The laws or events of the Jewish dispensation thus become for him types or pictures of the spiritual truths of the Christian dispensation. Upon the basis of such a theory there is the strongest inducement to emphasize the spiritual fact of which the literal meaning is supposed to be the type. When this is done typology has no practical advantage over the allegory pure and simple. For the literal meaning will be ignored in the interest of the more important spiritual meaning. But it is just this danger which Calvin avoided to a very remarkable degree. He confined his typologizing to theoretical statements and general examples, whereas his

exegesis was always concerned with the literal and historical meaning of the passage. This means that Calvin's principle of exegesis really triumphed over his dogmatic theories. Too much emphasis can scarcely be laid upon this fact. With every inducement which a strong dogmatic bias would suggest to dwell exclusively on the typical meaning of the various laws and historical incidents, and to discover types in the details of the laws and the histories, as a matter of fact his commentaries refrain from these "pleasing ingenuities" and search out the historical meaning. We may therefore conclude that Calvin's typology, so far as the exegetical method by which it was carried out is concerned, was really in the interest of securing the historical sense of a passage as against the allegorical. Both history and law were interpreted historically to a most surprising degree. The exegete triumphed over the theologian. The consequence was that the field of Messianic prophecy became, through the work of Calvin, exegetically greatly restricted in spite of his typologizing. When we examine Calvin's attitude toward the prophecies proper, and especially toward their fulfilment in the New Testament, the same distinction must be drawn between Calvin the exegete and Calvin the theologian, and even in a sharper way. As in the case of Luther, the theological interest in the proof from prophecy which had dominated patristic exegesis largely disappeared. The new issues had thrown it into the background. Hence the great importance attached to the exactness of the correspondence between prediction and fulfilment was not, at least from this point of view, so keenly felt. Calvin's exegesis of prophecy could therefore work more freely. Accordingly we find Calvin, though denying as a dogmatic theo-

logian any real difference between the original meaning of a prophecy and its manner of application in the New Testament, as an exegete unhesitatingly admitting such differences. As an exegete he refuses to allow the method of citation by the New Testament writers to determine the historical meaning of the passages in their Old Testament setting. In all the examples given above he adheres to the historical meaning of the prophecies. Again, as a dogmatic theologian he will not allow that the Evangelists really misapply Scripture, though their peculiar methods of citation often compel him as an exegete to say that they "seem to twist" it. He explains their use of the Old Testament prophecies by his theory of types. This is what he has in mind when he uses the terms "analogy" or "accommodation." But here, too, as in the instance already cited, the exegetical interest is convincingly demonstrated to be superior to the dogmatic, for the resort to the theory of the type is due to Calvin's desire to be true to the historical meaning of the prophecy. He rightly sees that the historical meaning is in no sense a real prediction of the event supposed to be fulfilled in the New Testament; therefore he substitutes the fulfilment of a type for a fulfilment of a prediction. The prediction is reduced to an "analogy." This means that Calvin as an exegete, in his fearless application of the Reformation principle of exegesis, had succeeded in emasculating the New Testament ἵνα πληρωθῇ of any distinctive meaning. Thus the argument from prophecy construed as prediction, which had already lost any real significance, was now exegetically broken down by Calvin. Would the exegetical results of Calvin be adhered to or would they be qualified in time by the dogmatic interests for which Calvin also

stood? This leads us to a consideration of the development in the post-Reformation period. But before passing to its discussion it will be well to gather up the results of our study of Luther and Calvin in their relationship to the general movement of thought which we have been following. (1) The apologetic interest in the sixteenth century had completely shifted as compared with the apologetic interest in the patristic period. The issues now were the doctrines of salvation — justification by faith, an individual experience, or justification by works through ecclesiastical mediation — and the question of authority — either Scripture, which supported the doctrine of the Reformers, or Tradition, which supported the contention of the Papal Church. The Reformers in their defense of the doctrine of justification by faith had been compelled to assert the sole authority of Scripture. (2) But to be an authority the Scriptures must be perspicuous. (3) To maintain its perspicuity the allegorical method of exegesis, which had been handed down from the patristic period, must be abandoned, and the Reformation principle of the one grammatico-historical sense must be substituted. The enunciation of this new principle was mainly the work of Luther. In its application to prophecy the new principle logically led to the following results, which are most clearly exhibited in the works of Calvin, where the principle finds its most sincere and consistent application. (a) The grammatico-historical method, which interprets according to the context and historical background of the prophecy, occasions a change of emphasis. The attention is unavoidably diverted from the asserted fulfilment of the prophecy to its original meaning. (b) The

grammatico-historical method of interpretation revealed the fact that many passages hitherto referred directly to the Messiah could, in their historical sense, be at most indirectly and typically referred to him. (c) It revealed the fact that other passages referred to the Messiah by means of the mystical exegesis had no reference to him at all, not even typical. (d) It revealed the fact that the meanings attributed to many Old Testament prophecies by the New Testament writers were not the meanings originally attached to them by their authors themselves. (e) It revealed the fact that the "in order that it might be fulfilled" of the Evangelists had in many cases no sound exegetical basis whatever.. It is not claimed that Calvin was acutely conscious of all this, but it *is* claimed that these conclusions are latent in his exegesis and many times are practically admitted by him, though he usually balances the admissions with theoretical statements which in reality involve him in a self-contradiction. (4) Such a radical departure from the received methods of prophetic interpretation did not at once arouse the opposition which one might have anticipated. The great issues had changed, and men's minds were not so engrossed as in the Early Church by the argument from prophecy. Moreover the results were obtained under cover of a method of exegesis which had become a dogmatic necessity to the Reformers. But in the startling results gained by Calvin lay the possibilities of a great strife. The Reformation principle of exegesis had been adopted in the interest of the authority of Scripture. But the results obtained by its application to prophecy seemed in turn to compromise the authority of Scripture. We must now turn our attention to the conflict which

arose between the Reformation doctrine of Scripture and the Reformation principle of exegesis in the age of Protestant scholasticism, and observe the effect of this conflict upon the interpretation of prophecy.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE REFORMATION PRINCIPLE OF EXEGESIS AND THE POST-REFORMATION DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE AND THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY [1]

As has already been pointed out, the two great Reformation doctrines are justification by faith and the sole authority of Scripture. The post-Reformation period intellectualized the former principle, externalized the latter principle and devitalized both. The apologetic interest in the anti-papal polemic was responsible for these consequences. For our present purposes it will be necessary to sketch the development only of the post-Reformation doctrine of Scripture.

I

The Council of Trent in its Fourth Session formulated its doctrine of authority to the following effect. "The truth and discipline (of the Gospel) are contained in the written books and the unwritten traditions which were received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy

[1] The citations in this chapter from Gerhard, Quenstedt, Turrettin and Owen are taken out of the works of these writers, those from Glassius out of Edouard König's Einleitung in das Alte Testament. For the remaining citations I am chiefly indebted to Diestel's Geschichte des Alten Testaments.

Ghost dictating, and have come down to us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand [observe the repetition of the ancient view that the New Testament books are to be subsumed under the idea of Tradition; compare p. 83]. [The synod] following the example of the orthodox Fathers [observe their inclusion in the Tradition] receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence the books both of the Old Testament and the New Testament — seeing that one God is the author of both — as also the said Traditions. . . as having been dictated either by Christ's own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession." After giving a list of the canonical books, including certain of the Old Testament apocrypha and the New Testament antilegomena (Hebrews, James, II Peter, Jude, II and III John and Revelation), it pronounces its formal anathema upon those who do not accept them along with the aforesaid traditions. The Vulgate is next adopted as the authentic edition of the Scriptures, and finally the Council lays down the doctrine of interpretation. "In order to restrain petulant spirits it decrees that no one relying on his own skill shall, in matters of faith and morals . . . wresting the sacred Scriptures to his own sense, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, *whose it is to judge of the true sense of the Holy Scripture,* hath held and doth hold. . . ." Bellarmin, the great expounder of Tridentine theology, states the position here set forth in an even more uncompromising fashion, if that is possible. "We assert that the whole doctrine which is necessary as respects faith and morals is *not* contained in the Scripture and that in addition to the written word

of God there is also an unwritten word of God, i.e. the divine and apostolic tradition," and of course it was the Pope who was the incarnation of this tradition. Against these boldly stated positions Lutheran and Reformed alike combined to formulate the dogma of the infallibility of Scripture. In place of the infallible Pope we are to have the infallible Word. The inspiration of the Scriptures had always been assumed in the Church as a matter of course, and this inspiration was usually supposed to be of the highest degree. What was practically a verbal dictation theory was held by most of the Fathers and Schoolmen. Luther inherited this theory from the scholastic theologians, but in his case it was qualified very materially. Calvin also held substantially to the same theory. But it had never been formally worked out in all its bearings as was now to be done in the interest of a thoroughly fortified doctrine of scriptural infallibility. The doctrine now took its place as a *Locus,* usually the *locus primus,* of Protestant dogmatic theologies, and was elaborated along three lines: (1) the infallibility of the content of Scripture, (2) the infallibility of its text and (3) the infallibility of the Canon.

In order effectually to secure the infallibility of the content it was thought necessary rigorously to exclude every human element from Scripture, and at this point the verbal dictation theory of inspiration was introduced in its most precise and logical formulation. According to this theory the real author of Scripture is God the Holy Spirit. The biblical writers were not authors in any true sense of the word, but mere *calami,* penmen, passive agents. Thus Gerhard analyzes the *causa efficiens* of Scripture into a "principal" and an "instru-

mental" cause. "The principal cause is the true God, one in essence, three in person." The instrumental causes of Scripture were the men peculiarly called and elected of God to consign the divine revelation to writing, and who are therefore justly called "amanuenses of God, hands of Christ, notaries and secretaries of the Holy Spirit, since they neither spoke nor wrote with any proper human will but φερόμενοι ὑπὸ τοῦ πνέυματος ἁγίου, *acti, ducti impulsi, inspiriti et gubernati a Spirito Sanctu* (!) When, therefore, any canonical book is called Book of Moses, Psalter of David, Epistle of Paul, this is merely with the meaning of service, not with the meaning of principal cause." "God was with them," says John Owen, the great Puritan divine, "and by the Holy Ghost so spake in them . . . that . . . their tongue in what they said or their hand in what they wrote was *'et sopher,* no more at their own disposal than the *pen in the hand of an expert writer.* They obtained nothing by study or inspiration, by inquiry or reading. Whether we consider the matter or the manner of what they received or delivered or their receiving or delivering it, they were but an instrument of music, giving a sound according to the intention and skill of him that strikes it." If one were indisposed to accept this theory he was graciously presented by John Owen with the alternative of Rome or atheism. Quenstedt expressed the same view with equal stringency. He combats the statement of Grotius, "that there was no need that the histories should be dictated by the Holy Spirit," and maintains that "when Luke wrote these things . . . he did not put them down from the relation of others or from his own memory, but from divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who directed the mind and the pen and suggested the things

to be written and the words in which they should be written." These scholastic theologians were fond of combating their opponents by the *reductio ad absurdum.* This theory of theirs itself culminated in a *reductio ad absurdum* when in 1659 the theological and philosophical faculties of Wittenberg condemned Beza's view that the Greek of the New Testament contained barbarisms and solecisms as blasphemous.

But of what value is such a theory of inspiration if the text has become corrupt? "But what, I pray," says Owen, "will it advantage us that God did so once deliver his word if we are not assured also that that word so delivered hath been by his special care and providence preserved entire and uncorrupt unto us. . . ." "Among the arguments," says Gerhard, "by which the Papists labor to show that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament is not authentic [Trent, it will be remembered, set up the Vulgate as authentic], this one takes the lead, that the Hebrew text has been corrupted in many places either by the malice or carelessness of men." Divine providence, he argues, would prevent such a catastrophe, otherwise the foundation of the Church would be destroyed. His *reductio ad absurdum* of the Catholic position is that if Scripture were corrupt, it would follow that God would be either unwilling or unable to preserve the text of Scripture, and Christ and the Apostles would have to be called to court because they failed to rebuke the Jews for their sacrilege in corrupting it! The *reductio ad absurdum* of Gerhard's own position is that he and his comrades in dogmatic sins against history were obliged to advocate the originality and inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points! Christ made the jot and the tittle an integral part of the Law (Mt. 5: 18). As Gerhard in-

terpreted the tittle as a reference to a vowel point, he found the originality of the vowel points supported by the highest authority! The infallibility of the contents and text having thus been secured, but one thing more was necessary.

The Council of Trent had declared for the equal authority of Tradition with the Scripture and of certain of the apocrypha along with the more generally accepted portions of the Bible. Against both these positions a divine and infallible delimitation of the Canon must be asserted. Chemnitz, in his *Examination of the Council of Trent* (1565–73), had earlier elaborated a theory of the Canon to the following effect: God had revealed his will in the beginning to Adam and this revelation had been handed down through the Patriarchs by oral tradition. Having become corrupted in Egypt it was renewed by Moses and committed to writing, in order to be preserved from further corruption. The Pentateuch, written by Moses, was placed in the ark and guarded by the Levites. Joshua and the Prophets gave no new revelation, but contributed "more illustrious interpretations." Their books were deposited by the side of the Pentateuch in the ark. Thus the Canon was gradually formed. This theory was adopted by Gerhard. He holds that the Canon was automatically closed when the last book was written by a prophetic and inspired man. But this theory did not satisfy the ever increasing dogmatic thirst engendered by the heat of Protestant polemics. It was necessary that the process just described should be *authoritatively closed*. Buxtorf in his great work, *Tiberias* (1665), completed the theory of the Canon by holding that Ezra and the men of the Great Synagogue (an institution which in reality had no historical existence),

among whom were the *inspired men,* Zechariah, Haggai, Malachi and Nehemiah, collected all the inspired books together after the Exile, excluded the false ones, formed the others into one corpus, and deposited them in the Holy of Holies where they remained till the advent of Christ. The dogmatic interest in this elaboration of Chemnitz's theory is beautifully revealed in the statement of Carpzov: "It was needful that the composition of the Canon should be public, not private, as it does not suffice, if a book is to be canonical, that it be divinely inspired, but this is required in addition, that it be divinely ordained and consecrated and handed down to the Church for a rule of faith and morals." These men conceded to the synagogue of the Jews an authority which they denied to the Christian Church, as Karlstadt long before pointed out in criticizing an analogous position adopted by Luther. The consequences for interpretation in general and for the interpretation of prophecy in particular of this snug but utterly impossible theory of a threefold infallibility are exceedingly interesting.

II

In the first place, the theory led to a typological treatment of the Old Testament which went far beyond the modest limits set for it by the exegesis of Calvin and which in its practical results could scarcely be distinguished from the patristic allegory. At this point we have to consider the connection between the verbal dictation theory of inspiration and another principle of interpretation dear to all the Reformers, namely, that Scripture is to be interpreted by Scripture. We find the formulation of this hermeneutical principle in *terms of*

the verbal dictation theory in the following thesis of Quenstedt: "The certain and infallible interpretation of Scripture can be gained from no other source than the Scripture itself; for Scripture, or rather the Holy Spirit speaking in and through Scripture, is its own legitimate and absolute interpreter." Gerhard gives us the following naïve syllogistic formulation of the same view: (a) He who is the principal and chief author of Scripture is the chief and authentic interpreter of Scripture. (b) The Holy Spirit is the principal and chief author of Scripture. (c) Ergo, he is the authentic interpreter. Now it was very clear on examination that the Bible was not equally perspicuous in all passages. Hence the above general canon of interpretation resulted in the further special canon that the more obscure passages of Scripture were to be interpreted by the clearer passages, or by the analogy of faith which was supposed to be drawn from the clear passages. Into the relationship of the analogy of faith to interpretation it is not necessary to enter in this connection except to say that it meant that exegesis was in most cases completely subjected to the creed. But in the interpretation of prophecy the principle that the obscure passages are to be interpreted by the clear passages means that a prophecy, the more obscure passage, must be interpreted in the light of its fulfilment, the clear passage. We find Gerhard expressly reaffirming the thesis of Irenæus that a prophecy before its fulfilment has no clear or certain exposition, and maintaining that "the best interpretation of all the prophetic vaticinations can and should be sought out of the fulfilment described in the New Testament." The dogmatic interest involved in making the New Testament writers normative for the meaning of an Old Testament

passage may be made clear if, following the proof-text and syllogistic method of the post-Reformation theologians themselves, we construct the following syllogism: Major premise-Gerhardus *loquitur:* "When all Scripture is given by the immediate afflatus of the Holy Spirit and is θεοπνευστος (God-breathed), then all things in it are συναληθη and agree together, so that nothing is contrary or repugnant to or dissident from itself"; minor premise-Glassius *loquitur:* "For why do the sacred writers in the New Testament cite the words of Moses and the prophets from the Old Testament? Surely in order to gain faith for their writings. But what faith can they gain if they usurp in bad faith the words of the authors, twisting or, what is worse, perverting their intention and meaning?" Conclusion-Witsius *loquitur:* "It must be held that the theopneustic doctors [in this connection the New Testament writers] show us the way and method by which we ought to proceed in the elucidation of types and hand us the key for the unlocking of these things." In other words, if the Fathers, on the basis of their theory of inspiration, could cite the New Testament writers to justify their allegorizing, certainly these Protestant theologians could justify their typologizing in the same way. Their hard and fast theory of inspiration and biblical infallibility absolutely *compelled* the acceptance of the New Testament method of citation as determinative of the Old Testament meaning. How far the idea could lead that the New Testament was normative for the interpretation of the Old Testament, may be seen in the statement of Amyraldus, who belonged, moreover, to the Reformed Church and to the very liberal school of Saumer, that "what the Apostles offered in this matter [i.e. in interpreting

Scripture] is an example according to whose norm all the other theologians should conform all their thought and meditation." On the basis of such principles the prophecies became as completely separated from their historical background as they were in the patristic exegesis. Thus, though Gerhard theoretically lays down in the beginning of his theology the excellent principle that "that sense is no doubt intended by the Holy Spirit which is gathered from the words taken in their proper and native meaning," yet, when he comes to the end of his massive work and is discussing the theories of the Millenarians, he holds that, while certain prophecies are to be interpreted literally and historically, as Is. 7: 14 (!), others are to be received "mystically, typically, symbolically and allegorically." To the latter class, he says, "belong those which treat in metaphorical terms of the state of the Church militant in the New Testament and of the state of the Church triumphant in heaven. For if any one will adhere too strictly to the words, he would be compelled to hold that the earthly Jerusalem would again be rebuilt, that the Israelites would again be collected from all the nations, that corporeal and external sacrifices would again be offered and that even the Levitical law would again be reinstated"—a most interesting and significant observation. He then adds this formula: "Just as the Apostles describe the things of the future age in terms of the present age, so the Prophets describe the things of the New Testament in terms of the Old Testament." At a later time Francke of the Pietistic school referred fifty psalms directly to Christ and argued from Luke 24: 44 that in the case of each psalm it must first be proved that it *cannot* refer to him. Rambach adduces

thirty-nine proof-texts (*sedes classicæ*) for the type and revived the theory of Irenæus, that if the literal sense contained anything unworthy of the Patriarchs it must be construed typically. On this principle he interprets Samson's marriage with Delilah as a figure of Christ who loved the Church taken from the gentiles, while Zeltner on the same principle actually defended the polygamy of the Patriarchs as a "*schema typicum.*" Gerhard himself allegorizes the tabernacle furniture with the ingenuity of a Clement of Alexandria. The seven golden candlesticks signify Christ, the Light of the World, Aaron's rod that budded typifies Christ sprung from the dry root of Jesse, the altar of incense likewise denotes Christ, for there is no altar pleasing to God except Christ, and upon this altar spiritual incense is to be placed, i.e. our prayers must rely on the merit of Christ. Gerhard says of the sacrifices generally, "The principal end of the sacrifices was to remind of the offering of the Messiah in the future on the altar of the cross."

Now all this means that the Reformation principle of exegesis, namely, the one grammatico-historical sense, is in the way of being completely abandoned. We have seen how Calvin's theories of typology endangered this principle but how his sober historical sense usually kept him from any fanciful application of his theories. This was not the case with those who came after him. Typology, instead of being restricted by exegesis, now completely dominates it, until at last we actually have the admission that there is more than the one sense of Scripture. There is not only the historical sense which the words themselves give, but also the mystical sense which was intended by the Holy Spirit. This idea is

expressly formulated by Glassius, whose work, *Philologia Sacra* (1623), was commended by the faculty of Jena, was welcomed by Gerhard, and may be considered to represent the current views of the time on hermeneutics, though more especially among the Lutherans. "The sense of Scripture," says Glassius, "is duplex, literal, and spiritual or mystical. . . . In this thesis the assertion is not indeed made that everywhere and in every text and individual passage of Scripture this double (sense) ought to be recognized and accepted. But concerning Holy Scripture the mode of speech (*sermo*) is of this kind, that in certain places which the Scripture points out as it were with raised finger, it is not to be explained in a literal sense, but, beyond the literal sense which is derived from the words, it admits also a mystical sense, i.e. the Holy Spirit himself intends a certain mystery or spiritual meaning in such a text, it having been first literally understood and expounded. . . ." Again, he says, "The sense of Scripture is that which God, the author of the Scriptures, sets forth in and by the Scriptures for men to recognize and understand. But in many texts of Scripture God set forth not only that which is gathered immediately from the words, but also something more sublime and mysterious." The reason for the affirmation of this double sense in Scripture is exhibited very clearly in Glassius. It is the New Testament use of the Old Testament. The story of the brazen serpent (Nu. 21) is to be taken in the historical and literal sense, but also "the thing itself [probably the supposed natural symbolism of the serpent on the pole] and the express confirmation of the Redeemer (John 3:14, 15) make us certain that the Holy Spirit understood and declared at

the same time that the Messiah must be exalted on the cross. . . . If it is said that Christ only made an accommodation of that history to himself, I respond, I concede the accommodation; but the question is whether he made it *beyond the intention of the Holy Spirit* speaking in the written history. Certainly this cannot be affirmed. Therefore it follows that Christ made such an accommodation to himself as at the same time to explain by himself the mystical sense of the Holy Spirit which He intended in the history." Similarly Glassius holds that Melchizedek was not only a type of Christ at the time when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, but long before, when Melchizedek was alive, and therefore the application of Gen. 14 in Heb. 7 was agreeable to the intention of Scripture and the Holy Spirit. But Glassius does not stop with this. He elaborates the mystical sense itself into an allegorical, a typical and a parabolic sense. He tried, it is true, to restrict the license which this gave the interpreter to turn the Scripture again into "a nose of wax," by introducing the three criteria of *raritas, concinnitas* or agreement with the analogy of faith, and *utilitas* or homiletical value, but his attempt was abortive as the illustrations of exaggerated typology already cited testify. It is interesting to compare with this position of Glassius, the Lutheran, the statements of the Reformed theologian, Francis Turrettin, of Geneva. He maintains, it is true, that there is but one true genuine sense of Scripture, but holds that this sense can be twofold, simple and composite (!). The simple sense is the historical sense, which "contains the declaration of just one thing and signifies nothing else." "The composite or mixed sense is found in oracles which refer to a type; a part

of it is found in the type and a part of it in the antitype. But these oracles do not contain two senses but two parts of one and the same sense intended by the Holy Spirit, who, along with the letter, is mindful of the mystery!" Turrettin is even able to apply the term allegory to the composite sense. He distinguishes two kinds of allegory, *allegoria innata* or inherent allegory, and *allegoria illata* or the allegory read into a passage. The former is contained in the composite sense as a part of it, because it was intended by the Holy Spirit [the allusion is to the stock passages, the brazen serpent, Gal. 4, etc.]. This is also called by Turrettin the mystical sense and is "sacred" because it is intended by the Spirit, and it has power to prove dogmas because the Spirit is its author. The *allegoria illata* is that which is added by men, and here the compliments of Turrettin are paid to Philo, Origen and the Fathers. It is clear that such statements are mere trifling with the theory of the one grammatico-historical sense. But it is only fair to state that these men attempted to avoid the consequences of their theories, though to no purpose. Thus, commenting on the use of Jon. 2:1 in Matthew 12:40, Glassius remarks that the literal sense is that which is signified by the words themselves and has to do only with the Prophet Jonah in the belly of the fish. But the mystical sense "is that which is signified, not by the words themselves, but by the thing signified by the words," and accordingly the mystical sense refers to Christ in the tomb. That is, the words themselves do not have two senses, but the events or things described by the words *may* have. If the words themselves may have two senses, then God the author of Scripture can put more into the words of Scripture than the penman

who wrote them was aware of; the "fecundity" of Scripture, of which the post-Reformation theologians so often speak, would then be found in its phraseology. This was the theory which was at the basis of the ancient allegorizing and was congenial to the thought of those days, when men were familiar with the oblique nature of the heathen oracles. But for the post-Reformation theologians the fecundity of Scripture was found not in its wording but in its subject-matter, and therefore, instead of the allegory, we have the type. So far as the practical results for exegesis were concerned they were the same, but the latter theory did more formal justice to the principle of the single sense of Scripture. The distinction which Glassius drew between the single sense of the words and the double sense of the things described by the words was taken advantage of and more precisely formulated by others whose Protestant ears were shocked by the way Glassius had expressed himself with reference to the two senses. Calovius opposed these statements of Glassius, and Quenstedt, following Calovius, draws the following sharp distinction: "The sense of the words or sayings is one thing, and the typical significance of a thing or a history described in Scripture, which is intended by God, is another. For God is able to intend something by a certain history, but when the history is described, the words by which it is described do not have a double sense, one literal and the other mystical, but the sense of them is one; yet through *the thing itself described in the words* God desired to set before the eyes of men at the same time something else, yet not at all by the words which described it." By this position Calovius and Quenstedt sought to avoid the Scylla upon which Glassius seemed to be in danger

of shipwreck. But in fleeing Scylla they were engulfed in a Charybdis of their own which in some respects proved even more fatal. This leads us to the last point to be made in the criticism of the post-Reformation exegesis.

Those who held to a double sense could still find room for an historical sense. But those who denied the double sense and at the same time held to the normative value of the New Testament for the interpretation of prophecy, could only hold to the mystical sense, i.e. that sense of a prophecy which the New Testament put upon it. According to the Reformed theologian Rivetus the distinction between the literal (historical) sense and the spiritual sense is absurd, since the Scripture affords *only* the sense of the Holy Spirit. It is significant that Quenstedt prefers the term "literal sense" to "historical sense." According to his view the literal sense of an Old Testament prophecy is not what would seem to be the historical sense, but the sense which the New Testament gives it. In this theory Protestant scholasticism has returned to that to which it is nearest of kin, Roman Catholic scholasticism (cf. the view of Gerson above p. 112). It is bad enough to distinguish two senses; it is worse to confound them, for this means the obliteration of the historical sense entirely. It is probably a dim consciousness of this that led Turrettin to the following absurd statement in which he seems to try to balance between Glassius and Quenstedt. "The literal sense is sometimes taken more broadly for the entire complex of the composite sense intended by the Holy Spirit, whether in type or in antitype, and so contains also within itself (*sub se*) a mystery [here the literal sense is identified with the mystical sense or the allegory,

which is what Turrettin really means by his composite sense]. Sometimes it is taken more strictly for that which the words immediately and directly indicate and so is distinguished from the mystical sense, for this latter sense is not so much signified by the words as by the things signified by the words. . . ." Here there is an admission of two senses in agreement with Glassius. It is a relief to know that his more celebrated and clear-thinking son, Alphonse, broke altogether with these contradictory and impossible statements of the father and denied the normative value of the New Testament for the original meaning of the Old Testament. To what exegetical crimes the identification of the literal sense with the mystical may lead is well illustrated in Quenstedt's murder of the contextual meaning of Hos. 11:1. He objects to Gerhard's interpretation which maintained that the verse referred immediately and historically, or *sensu litterali,* to Israel, but immediately and prophetically, or *sensu mystico,* to Christ. "In this way many senses would be constituted of one and the same biblical passage, as the Papists here would have it." [Note the apologetic interest in his attempt to maintain the Reformation principle of exegesis.] [1] Accordingly Hos. 11:1 must be referred in its literal sense directly to Christ, and the following astounding interpretation is offered, in support of which Quenstedt is able to cite Osiander, Tarnovius and Calovius among the Lutherans, and Gomarus and Rivetus among the Calvinists. "Although Israel is a boy, uneducated, tender, weak, and unable to control himself, nevertheless I loved him.

[1] Turrettin shows the same apologetic anxiety. "The many places which are cited by the Papists to prove a multiple sense only show that there is a *composite sense,* in type and in antitype, which is fulfilled in various stages, first in type and second in antitype."

Then, lest he should entirely perish, if left to himself and without a guide, out of Egypt I called, i.e. decreed to call in his own time, not the boy Israel, but as it distinctly says, my son, i.e. the Messiah, who should receive and guide Israel lest in his imprudence he should precipitate ruin upon himself. Thus, while antecedents and consequents are referred without any distortion to Israel, the words which are cited in Matthew can be accepted in the literal sense of Christ." [1] In such a passage as this post-Reformation dogma has completely triumphed over Reformation exegesis as illustrated in Calvin.

It is no wonder, therefore, that to the men whose views we have been discussing and illustrating the result at which Calvin had arrived in his interpretation of prophecy could not fail to be offensive. How could his frank admissions of differences between Old Testament prophecy and New Testament citation square with these high theories of inspiration and with the principle of interpreting Scripture by Scripture, controlled as that principle was by these theories. No doubt Calvin also had a very high theory of inspiration, but it had not been drawn out and elaborated by him in the formal way in which it was subsequently developed by the post-Reformation scholastics. Only when this was done did the essential disagreement between his theory of inspiration and his exegetical results become apparent, as

[1] With the above astonishing interpretation of Quenstedt may be compared the following rabbinic gloss upon Jacob's lie, "I am Esau thy first-born." The sentence is to be read, "I am (the one who is to receive the Decalogue which begins with I), Esau is thy first-born." (!) The Protestant theology of the seventeenth century was often more closely akin to rabbinic theology and method than it realized.

it had not become to the great Genevan himself. The more logically and sharply Calvin's theory of inspiration was defined, the more inconsistent with it was his exegesis of prophecy seen to be. Furthermore, the typical or mystical sense which Calvin allowed naturally tended to become the most important sense, especially for those who were interested in dogma rather than in history. Was it not the sense which the Holy Spirit himself intended? The supreme exegetical interest would be to discover this mystical sense and it would therefore ignore more and more the historical sense. Accordingly the development after Calvin was almost altogether along the lines of his theory of typology rather than along the lines of his principles of exegesis. The results of his exegesis were most distasteful. If any doubt is still left that we have correctly interpreted Calvin's attitude toward prophecy, it should be entirely dissipated by the criticisms passed upon it by the post-Reformation theologians. They saw clearly the incompatibility of his exegesis with the orthodox theories of prophecy and Scripture. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that Calovius praised Cocceius because "he did not snatch away with his Calvin the many oracles of the Old Testament from Christians or render them ambiguous, but explained them dexterously of Christ," or to hear that Glassius blamed Calvin for denying the Messianic reference in Is. 63: 1–6. It is not surprising to discover that in 1593 Hunnius of Marburg published a book with the title *Calvinus Judaizans*, or that the same Hunnius wrote another work, *De sacrosancta Maiestate, autoritate, fide ac certudine sacræ scripturæ*, which became typical for the treatment of this subject in Lutheran apologetics, and in which one of the proofs

adduced for the divinity of the Scripture is the fulfilment of prophecy. It is a significant fact that the man who attacks Calvin so vigorously defends at length the infallibility of the Bible and revives the proof from prophecy, this time not to prove the Messiahship of Jesus, but to prove that God, who knows all things and therefore the events which are to come, is the author of the Scripture.[1]

Thus we meet with the strange and instructive phenomenon that the principle of the one grammatico-historical sense, originally enunciated by the Reformers in order to maintain the doctrine of the authority of Scripture, which had been undermined by the allegorical method of interpretation, is now for all practical purposes abandoned by the post-Reformation theologians in the interest of an erroneous development of that doctrine, and the results which Calvin had obtained through the honest application of the Reformation principle of exegesis are now either ignored or rejected in favor of the post-Reformation doctrine of infallibility.

Through their adhesion to this doctrine the post-Reformation theologians were confronted in their interpretation of prophecy with a dilemma, either horn of which meant exegetical disaster. If, as the orthodox theory of infallibility demanded, the New Testament methods of citation were absolutely normative for the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies, then there must be allowed either a double sense to the prophecies, one historical and the other mystical, in which case the Reformation principle of exegesis is practically surrendered, or, if the singleness of the sense is adhered to,

[1] Calvin had hardly more than sketched out this argument in the *Institutes*. And it is given a very subordinate position.

the historical sense must be altogether discarded in favor of the mystical, called literal only by courtesy, in which case all barriers against typologizing are set aside and the historical meaning of the prophecies is as completely lost as in the patristic allegory. Unfortunately, though not unnaturally, the interpretation of prophecy thus became indissolubly bound up with the inspiration controversy. A delicate and difficult alternative was presented to Protestant theology. Its doctrine of Scripture was hammered out in its great controversy with Rome. It was this doctrine which had come to seem to the average Protestant, equally with the doctrine of justification by faith, the article of the standing or falling Church. But Protestantism must either practically abandon the Reformation principle of exegesis or modify very materially the post-Reformation doctrine of Scripture. In the attempt to interpret prophecy the absolute incompatibility of the two principles was most clearly revealed. Were the New Testament writers to be regarded as giving the norm for the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies, as the Fathers always argued? Dogma said they were to be so regarded; exegesis said they were not. There can be no compromise at this point. The alternative is absolute. A choice must be made. The post-Reformation theologians made their choice and, as could have been anticipated, landed themselves to all intents and purposes back with the Fathers whom they affected to repudiate. But was this to be the final choice of Protestantism? The answer to this question depends upon the outcome of the inspiration controversies

CHAPTER IX

THE CHOICE OF THE ALTERNATIVE, AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

It lies outside the scope of this treatise to trace the development of the inspiration controversies of the last three hundred years. It is sufficient to observe that in their essence they are a struggle between the Reformation principle of exegesis and the post-Reformation doctrine of Scripture, between an historical and a dogmatic interpretation of the Bible.[1]

I

The inspiration controversies have made it clear which of these alternatives Protestant scholarship has slowly but surely determined to accept. While the post-Reformation theologians clung to the doctrine of an infallible Scripture, Protestant scholars have followed the lead of the Reformation principle of exegesis. In the

[1] Into this struggle many factors have entered, some of them no doubt rationalistic and anti-supernaturalistic. But so far as the connection of these controversies with the interpretation of prophecy is concerned, the question of the supernatural has, strictly speaking, nothing to do. It was simply a question as to whether Protestant scholarship would interpret prophecy historically, in line with the principles of the first Reformers, or allegorically on the basis of a certain theory of inspiration. The possibility or impossibility of predictive prophecy did not in principle enter into the discussion.

controversy of the seventeenth century which raged over the lower criticism of the Bible, the death blow was struck at the verbal dictation theory of Scripture and the infallibility of the text. The testimony of the great polyglots, which were published in and immediately after the Reformation, to the corruption of the text was too overwhelming for even dogma, blind as it ordinarily is to the true significance of historical evidence, successfully to dispute. There is no longer any serious attempt in orthodox circles which make any pretense to follow scholarly methods of research to support the theory of an errorless text of Scripture. This is undoubtedly an illogical position for those to hold who still adhere to a dogmatic view of Scripture, as they could easily discover if they would return to the pit out of which they were dug, in other words familiarize themselves with the logic of the post-Reformation theologians. The attempt to hide from themselves this defect in their logic by a resort to the supposed errorlessness of the original autographs is as ineffectual as the proverbial futile camouflage of the ostrich. The admission, even though it is a half-hearted one, of the present corruption of the text is all important. It subtracts all practical value from the doctrine of infallibility, for the infallibility of the original autographs has only a theoretical and academic interest. Therefore when once the fallibility of the text of Scripture was established the next step was inevitable. In the great battle of the nineteenth century over the higher criticism, the smoke of which has scarcely yet cleared away, the fallibility of the content was established and an historical conception of Scripture has been substituted for a dogmatic conception. This involves

a change in the conception of the Canon. There is no longer any such thing as an infallibly authenticated Canon of Scripture. The biblical books are canonical, if one wishes to retain the word, in a new sense, which takes up within it, however, the truth that lies in the earliest use of the term. They are the historical norms of the Hebrew and Christian religions in so far and only in so far as they are the books in which these religions find their classical expression. Thus the doctrine of the infallibility of Scripture, which had been developed along the lines of the infallibility of the text, of the content and of the Canon, was completely broken down in the inspiration controversies. But what does this mean for the interpretation of prophecy?

II

We have seen how the Reformation principle of exegesis was enunciated by Luther and Calvin in an intensely dogmatic interest. It was formulated in order to secure the perspicuity of the Bible and so to protect it as a final authority against the claims of the Pope to be its only lawful interpreter. This principle, because enunciated in a dogmatic, rather than an historical, interest, at first succumbed, when the very principle which it was called in to protect became endangered by its own energetic operation. But in the purging fires of the inspiration controversies this Reformation principle became freed from the dogmatic interest which had swathed it and stood forth in its own true character as the scientific principle of historical research. The great Humanist movement which ran parallel to the Reformation had now entered into the development of

Protestantism. It did this in many ways but in no way so directly and influentially as through the scientific principle of exegesis applied to the Scriptures. But when once this stage has been reached and the exegetical principle of the one grammatico-historical sense has been applied to the interpretation of prophecy, it is not to be wondered at that a principle which attained such remarkable results even in the hands of Calvin, hampered as it then was by the strongest dogmatic considerations, should arrive at more far-reaching consequences than Calvin ever dreamed of, when moving freely and flexibly as a scientific principle. The inevitable result has been to discover that the New Testament writers not only *seemed* to twist the Scriptures from their original meaning but actually at times *did* do so, and that Calvin's generalization of the ἵνα πληρωθῇ into a prophetic analogy inevitably leads to the denial of any predictive Messianic prophecy in the proper sense of that phrase. These admissions cannot be avoided. Protestantism, which adopted the Reformation principle of exegesis in self-defense, must be prepared to accept the consequences of its own act. The theory of Messianic prophecy construed as prediction must be abandoned. In closing it is well to balance the losses and the gains which are involved in this admission.

III

The interests which are supposed to be secured by the maintenance of predictive prophecy are fourfold: (1) the proof of inspiration in particular, (2) the proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, (3) the proof of the supernatural in general, (4) the justification of the Millennial hope. It must be candidly admitted that the denial of

predictive prophecy affects these various interests in a radical way. But it is claimed that what is given back is of far more value than what is taken away, that the denial of predictive prophecy is not simply a work of destruction, but it is a liberating process which clears the way for a profounder and more spiritual appreciation of all these interests which have just been mentioned.

Undoubtedly the denial of predictive prophecy necessitates a fundamental change in our ideas of inspiration. On the one hand this denial implies that the Old Testament Prophets predicted many things which never have been and never can be fulfilled. On the other hand it implies that the New Testament writers assigned meanings to Old Testament passages which cannot possibly have been intended by their original authors. Neither of these implications is consistent with the inspiration theory which has been current in the Church. But this result is not to be deplored; it is to be welcomed. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that predictive prophecy has always been immediately connected with a non-moral theory of inspiration. This connection is not accidental but essential. On the predictive theory the Prophet is able to project himself centuries beyond his own day and place himself in circumstances and scenes absolutely alien to his thoughts and experiences. To take a striking example outside the sphere of Messianic prophecy and yet immediately connected with the theory of predictive prophecy as applied to Messianic times — Isaiah in the eighth century B. C. is supposed to be able to project himself into the totally changed situation of the sixth century B. C. and predict the redemption of the Jews from exile by Cyrus. Now there was nothing in his own experience which would enable him either to

do this or, if he did it, to understand its meaning. Such a prediction could only be the result of a direct revelation from heaven which was *psychologically unmediated.* But this is simply to say in other words that the inspiration of the Prophet was a purely mechanical process and that the Prophet himself was a mere passive agent of the Holy Spirit, a pipe by which the heavenly reservoirs of wisdom were tapped, or in the language of the post-Reformation theologians a *calamus*, a penman, an amanuensis of the Holy Spirit. What is true of such an example as the one just given is true also of the whole range of Messianic prophecy as this has been commonly interpreted. To the Prophet himself his own prophecies were enigmas which could not be understood until the fulfilment. Thus in proportion as the emphasis is laid upon the predictive theory of prophecy, exactly in that proportion will the verbal dictation theory of inspiration be implied. Now the objection to this theory of inspiration which I would urge is not its impossibility, but its meaninglessness for the Prophet himself, and therefore its non-moral character. The Prophet is not a real man any longer. Inspiration has paralyzed his normal powers, has isolated him from his own day and generation and placed him in an absolutely unreal world. There is an artificiality about the whole conception of the inspiration of the Prophet and the function of predictive prophecy, when looked at from the point of view of the Prophet himself, which is incompatible with any real moral significance in his act of prophesying. On the modern view all this is changed. The inspiration of the Prophet is no longer a mechanical process but a profound spiritual experience. He is not a machine but a man. As a man he receives his revelations and as a man

he gives them. The shepherd, Amos, hears God's call as a lion's roar, and the husband, Hosea, hears it at his desolated hearth-stone. The Prophet is not to be thought of as uttering enigmas whose real meaning he is unable to comprehend himself, but as preaching profound truths the significance of which he is intensely aware of, and with a purpose in proclaiming them which is immediate and moral. When the hand of the Lord was strong upon Isaiah (Is. 8: 11) this did not insulate him, but made his reaction to the electric thrill of the historical crisis in which he then was more immediate and morally significant. And this leads us to the next consideration. On the theory of inspiration which underlies the theory of predictive prophecy the predictions of the Prophets had even less moral significance for the people who heard them than for the Prophet who uttered them. If they were enigmas to the Prophets, how much more so to the people. It might be supposed that the inspiration which suggested the enigmas to the Prophet also suggested their interpretation, but how can this be supposed in the case of the people? Are they also to be thought of as caught up along with the Prophet into the third heaven, where they heard unutterable things? The difficulty which exists at this point is clearly revealed in Calvin's admission that there is nothing in the Old Testament itself to explain the types in a Messianic sense, and therefore it must be supposed that the Holy Spirit in some way (Calvin does not suggest how) teaches the people the meaning of the types. Thus the predictive theory of prophecy, which turns the prophecies into enigmas, breaks down the moral significance of the prophecies for the people who heard them. The modern theory of prophecy emphasizes the relation-

ship of the Prophet to the spiritual and moral needs of his own day. It lays the emphasis not upon prediction and fulfilment, which always removes the interest away from the prediction to the fulfilment, but upon the conception of the Prophet as a preacher and reformer. This centers the attention not upon the hidden meaning of the prophecy, to be revealed hundreds of years later, but upon the obvious meaning of the prophecy for the time in which it was delivered. The work of Elijah now becomes the typical work of the Prophet. In his work prediction plays but a small part, and there is no Messianic prophecy in it whatever, though he became the type, and rightly so, of the forerunner of the Messiah. Elijah is primarily a reformer and what is true of him is true of the great literary Prophets. They are not to be thought of as uttering enigmas which neither they nor any one else could understand, but they were men thoroughly alive to the historical situations of their own day and generation, in which they were intensely active workers. To take another illustration outside our immediate subject of Messianic prophecy — the modern scholar asks what possible meaning there is in Daniel's predictions to the Jews of deliverance from the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes at a time when all they desired was to be delivered from the tyranny of Babylon. To compare small things with great, it is as if a dentist should undertake to comfort a patient suffering from a violent toothache by telling him that he would eventually recover from a far worse attack five years later. The question of the supernatural is not so much involved in the interpretation of Daniel as the question of plain common sense. Thus the modern view of prophecy emphasizes its moral element by connecting it with

the spiritual experience of the Prophet through whom it was delivered (a moralized view of inspiration), and with the needs of the people to whom it was originally delivered (a moralized view of the function of prophecy). In place of the penman we get the preacher, in place of the enigma we get the sermon. The modern view agrees with Paul's, who said that he would rather speak five words with his understanding that he might instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue. The result is that never before in the history of biblical interpretation has the Prophet been clothed with such a vital interest as at present, or the moral grandeur of his work and its significance for later times, as well as for the Prophet's own day, been so fully recognized. Granted that many of the anticipations of the Prophets did not come to pass at the time or in the way that they expected, this detracts in no way from the conception of them as preachers of righteousness and expounders of a pure religion in the midst of the moral darkness and chaos of the ancient world. From the same point of view from which ancient prophecy is considered, the question of the interpretations of the Old Testament by the New Testament writers may also be explained. The inspiration theory which underlies the idea that interpretations of the Old Testament must be accepted as infallibly authoritative is again the same theory of inspiration which underlies the predictive theory of prophecy. By this theory the New Testament writers are rendered immune to the conditions of thought and modes of argument imposed upon them as children of their own age. Such a conception the modern theory of inspiration again repudiates. Now the question involved in a discussion of the New Testament methods of citation is not

whether Jesus was truly the Messiah or not, but it is a question of *how this fact is to be proved.* Here it must be admitted that the New Testament writers followed in their proof the general exegetical method of their day. They did not always hold to the strict historical sense of the original, but they allegorized and typologized. In so doing they presented the proof from prophecy which appealed most forcibly to their own minds and which they believed would be most convincing to the minds of their contemporaries. It was an *ad hominem* argument based upon a method of exegesis considered as legitimate by their opponents in the case of their own sacred books. At this point we must recognize that the New Testament writers who interpreted the prophecies were children of their day, in exactly the same way as the Prophets who originally uttered them were children of their day. The form of their argument was historically conditioned. We have no evidence that they surpassed in scientific acquirements the generation in which they lived. But an exegetical method belongs to the realm of science, not of religion. Why should we therefore be troubled to find Matthew or Paul or John following the scientific method of interpreting sacred books in use in their day? If they had possessed at their disposal the full critical apparatus of modern scholarship, they would have been largely unintelligible to their contemporaries. But while in the interest of clear thinking it must be recognized without reservation that the method of exegesis in the New Testament does not differ in the slightest degree *in principle* from the method followed by the Greeks or the Jews or the Fathers, it must also be admitted in the interest of a just historical appreciation that *in the application* of this method the New

Testament writers, as has already been pointed out (p. 69), were far superior to the extra-canonical writers. They did not play upon words or indulge in grotesque interpretations except in rare instances (Gal. 4:22 and Mt. 12:40). Jesus' use of the Old Testament is especially conspicuous in its sobriety. He and his followers were not interested in its historical meaning but they *did* understand the religious significance of the Old Testament, and it is surprising how true their exegesis usually was to its spirit. From this point of view it may be admitted that the New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament is the truest interpretation. It reveals what is permanent in the Old Testament, and Augustine's aphorism still stands — the Old Testament is patent in the New Testament — even though we may not deduce all he did from this principle. But it does not follow that we are bound by the exegetical method of the New Testament writers or that we discredit them when we admit that the emphasis which they laid, in accordance with their method, upon a literal correspondence between prediction and fulfilment is not satisfactory to us. We seek to get at the result at which they aimed by a different scientific process more adapted to the modes of thought in our own times. Thus, while the denial of predictive prophecy radically affects our theories of inspiration, it prepares the way for a much truer and more spiritual conception of it. Inspiration is now immediately related to experience and thereby becomes moralized as it had never been before.

It has just been stated that we seek to get at the same end as the New Testament writers aimed at, but by a different way. By the argument from prophecy construed as prediction the New Testament writers sought

to establish the Messiahship of Jesus. Now this doctrine in its original sense has lost much of its meaning for the Christian Church. The immense importance at one time attached to the Messiahship of Jesus has tended to keep alive the doctrine and along with it the argument by which it was supported, but in Christian theology the question of Jesus' divinity, or more precisely his deity, has thrown the importance of his Messianic character into the background. But is there then no real connection between Jesus and prophecy, and no religious interest to be conserved in establishing a connection? Is the Gnostic contention correct and is the unity of the two Testaments to be abandoned? Or is not, rather, Marcion's conception of a Christ "suddenly sent" after all an historically erroneous and religiously vapid conception? "From God nothing comes suddenly because there is nothing which is not ordered and arranged by God." Jesus himself made the claim that he came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. Is this claim a total misconception of his own ministry? The context in which these words were spoken will help us to answer this question. They were spoken in the Sermon on the Mount and in that part of it which deals with the deepening and broadening of the principles of the Old Testament. Not a word is said in this connection about the fulfilment of predictions. Just as Jesus fulfilled the Law not by emphasizing the letter of its observance but by pointing out its wider reach and deeper import, so he fulfilled prophecy, *not because he is the fulfiller of prophetic predictions but because he is the fulfiller of prophetic ideals.* In the former case the emphasis is laid upon the adventitious and morally meaningless correspondencies between isolated prophecies and isolated events

in Jesus' life. The prophecies are enigmas and the fulfilments are signs. And the more unexpected and impossible the fulfilments are, the more handy they become as signs, as the Fathers themselves pointed out. Christ must somehow ride both the ass and the foal of the ass, as Matthew informs us, in order to meet the conditions of the prophecy,[1] and Jonah in the fish's belly becomes a prophecy of the burial and resurrection of Christ. On the modern view of prophecy the emphasis is laid upon the great ethical and spiritual sequences running between the Old Testament and the New. Jesus does not point to Jonah in the belly of the fish, but to the men of Nineveh, who were to rise up in the judgment and condemn that generation because they repented not at the *preaching* of Jonah, and because, though a greater than Jonah was there, all they wanted of him was a sign. The sermon again takes the place of the sign as proof and the argument for the Messiahship of Jesus proceeds along moral lines.[2] But in all this there is a hint also of the change which is to be effected in our views of the supernatural. The proof of the supernatural in Christianity has been based on two series of phenomena, the miracles of the Bible, which are supposed to be the

[1] Matthew alone of the synoptists refers to Zech. 9:9 as fulfilled by Jesus at the entry into Jerusalem, and by a slight change in the Greek of Mark, which is covered up in the R. V., he makes the Lord sit on both animals, not on the clothes, as the R. V. seeks to suggest. Compare Mt. 21:1–7 with Mk. 11:1–7.

[2] The application of the experience of Jonah to Christ's burial in the tomb is again contributed by Matthew and is notably absent in Luke. It could not have been a part of Jesus' original discourse as it is directly contrary to the purpose of it. Jesus was rebuking the demand of the Pharisees for a sign. He points them to the men of Nineveh who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and to the queen of the South who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

evidences of God's omnipotence, and the fulfilments of prediction, which are supposed to be evidences of God's omniscience. The latter line of evidence will be seriously impaired if predictive prophecy is given up. Does this mean, then, a denial of the supernatural? It does so only if the supernatural and the miraculous are held to be the same thing. The correctness of this identification cannot be admitted. The miraculous is only a supposed evidence of the existence of the supernatural. This evidence in the present case is found to be exceptionally dubious. But the denial of the satisfactoriness of a certain line of evidence for a thing is not the same as denying the existence of the thing itself. As a matter of fact the new views of prophecy afford a much stronger evidence for the genuinely supernatural than the old views. The new view of prophecy does not concentrate its attention upon a series of unconnected predictions whose truth depends upon their minute, literal fulfilment, but it looks upon prophecy as a great organic movement in the history of Israel, extending through the centuries, and in its moral power and grandeur presenting a phenomenon absolutely unique in the ancient world, and most easily explicable on the assumption of a supernatural guidance. Prophecy is not to be regarded after the analogy of the classic mantic; but it is a kind of sublime philosophy of history, whose controlling principle, in its treatment of the history of the race, is an unshaken faith in the providential guidance of the Living God, whose great practical purpose is to illustrate and emphasize the supremacy of the Law of Righteousness in determining, under God, the weal or woe of man, and whose crowning glory is its inspired optimism as to the final struggle between good and evil in the race, when all the

various threads of human history shall be woven into the banner of the Church Triumphant. It is when we look upon prophecy in this larger way and as an organic whole that we obtain a broader basis for apologetics. We may now admit that individual Prophets failed in their predictions, that there was, as Luther himself recognized, some wood, hay and stubble mixed in with the pure gold, that such Messianic predictions as there were, were not fulfilled in any real sense in Jesus' life, and yet retain our faith in prophecy as a great historical and religious movement which found its consummation in Christianity, and see in this marvelous development the strongest evidence of its supernatural character and abiding truth. We are no longer compelled to stake all on the questionable correspondencies of prediction and fulfilment.

There is a final interest which the denial of predictive prophecy immediately affects and that is the Millennial hope. By this hope is not meant the expectation already referred to that the kingdoms of this world are finally to become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, that we are to look for a spiritual consummation of this world order which will be satisfying to the moral demands of the conscience of the race. But by the Millennial hope is meant an expectation of a particular *way* in which this consummation is to take place, the setting up of an earthly kingdom and the reign of Christ for a thousand years, with various accompanying signs and wonders in heaven above and the earth beneath and in the waters under the earth. The denial of predictive prophecy effectually vetoes such expectations. William Miller, the founder of the famous Millerite movement, in his original essay, published in 1835, makes the following significant argument: "At [Christ's] advent his

forerunner was spoken of —'one crying in the wilderness'— the manner of his birth — a child born of a Virgin — the place where — Bethlehem — the time of his death — seventy weeks — the star that appeared, the stripes he received, the miracles he performed, the taunting of his foes, all was literally fulfilled. Then why not suppose that all the prophecies concerning his *second* appearance will be as literally accomplished as the former? Can any one show a single reason why not?" . . . In this paragraph Miller, though probably quite unconsciously, repeats the argument of Justin Martyr which we have quoted above (p. 19). In it we have the justification of the Millennialist interpretation of Scripture. Its premises are an inerrant Bible and the fact of predictive prophecy. If the prophecies of the First Advent were as literally fulfilled as has always been claimed, the attempts of these students of Scripture to unlock the remaining enigmas that must refer to the Second Advent, because not yet fulfilled, must be recognized as legitimate. There can be no such thing in an errorless Scripture as an unfulfilled prediction. All those, therefore, who share with the Millennialists their two premises of an inerrant Scripture and the predictive theory of prophecy, are precluded in principle from criticizing the Millennialist position. Fault may be found with specific chronological calculations, errors may be pointed out in the exegesis of this or that passage, but no exception in principle can be taken to the attempt to fix the times and the seasons with astronomical certainty. It all depends upon the discovery of the right key. If the secret has not been unlocked before this, it is because the true key has not as yet been found. But this must not deter faith from further study. Previous

failure must stimulate, not check, still more careful search for the key that will not remain forever lost. On the other hand, if the correspondencies which the Church has always supposed to exist between the prophecies and the events of the First Advent do not really exist, then the various Millennialist attempts to read the signs of the times are so much labor wasted, and the peculiar forms which the Millennialist hope takes must be relegated to the place where they properly belong — the sphere of Christian mythology. Here again the alternative is a sharp one. But the revival of the Millennial hopes at the present time and the rapidity with which they seem to be spreading are rather discouraging indications of how little the churches are aware of what has been actually accomplished in the last hundred years in the way of rightly understanding the Bible. Good Christian people go to school and college and acquire facts about nature and history which are utterly at variance with the forms of religious thought in which they have been raised. Yet they cling doggedly to these forms and still wonder why religion seems to be so unreal to them or to have so little bearing upon everyday life. The renewed interest in Millenarianism at this time is a striking indication of the fact that a very large number of Christians still lack the first and most important premise for the readjustment of the Christian religion to modern thought, without which it must inevitably, even though gradually, cease to be a living force. This premise is an appreciation of the real facts as to the Bible and its interpretation which historical research has placed in our hands.

In what has preceded I have sought to show that, though certain conceptions must be altered and certain interests seem at first sight to be sacrificed if the thesis

of this essay is accepted, the results of our study are not simply destructive. They contain within them the basis for new views of inspiration, of the supernatural, of the relationship of Jesus to the Old Testament, which are more satisfying to modern thought and more helpful to modern needs. Because the forms of religious faith and the arguments by which it is supported are revised from age to age, this does not mean an abandonment of the essence of our faith.

The wonder of the Christian religion is its power of adaptation. It is a living organism because it grows and changes, though remaining true to its life principles. When it ceases to grow, when its power of adaptation fails, then its death-hour will have struck. In the new views of inspiration, of the supernatural and of the connection of Christ with prophecy, which a denial of the predictive theory of prophecy has necessitated, it has been found that the spiritual and moral interest has in each case superseded the interest in the strictly miraculous. The prodigy of fulfilment has given place to the wonder of a moral consummation. What is true in these other interests which the denial of predictive prophecy affects is preëminently true in the case of the Millennial hope. This hope is a purely apocalyptic hope and implies not a moral but a crassly miraculous consummation of history. Its outlook upon society is pessimistic. The world is steadily growing worse instead of better. Nothing can save it but a *deus ex machina.* In fact society itself is incapable of any redemption at all; only individuals here and there will be saved by the intervention of the Lord. The moral and spiritual forces released by the First Advent will miserably fail except in isolated instances, and the World, which at the creation

was pronounced by the Creator "very good," will be completely destroyed in a great miraculous cataclysm of wrath, out of which a few elect souls will be delivered by an equally miraculous Rapture (1 Thess. 4: 17). It is not denied that many individuals find a real comfort in these expectations, especially at times of world upheaval such as the present. It is not denied that the intense other-worldliness of these expectations fosters at times a genuine piety, which is a rebuke to the secular spirit of our average Christianity and worthy of admiration and emulation. Nevertheless the Millennial hope is an anachronism in modern life, and like all anachronisms its ultimate tendency is harmful and only harmful. It rapidly degenerates into hysteria and morbidness, which its adherents are apt to identify with supreme devotion, but which are only manifestations of mental disease. It cultivates an exclusiveness in religion that speedily tends to become fanatical. It has no place for the great movements of social betterment which are so characteristic of modern religion, because it believes these are unavailing. Its other-worldliness is anti-cultural. It refuses to permit religion to conquer the world and appropriate to itself the achievements of art and science. The beauty and the joy of life are not things to be consecrated but temptations to be shunned. In a word, it refuses to believe in the highest spiritual and moral forces that operate in the development of the race, and pins its faith to miracle in the baldest and most unmoral form in which miracle has ever been conceived — the miraculous counter-attack upon the spiritual achievements of the race. Fortunately the great body of opinion in the Christian Church has always set itself against this unhealthy form of the Christian religion. Thanks to Augustine, who

wrote his great work when the initial attacks of the Northern hordes upon the city of Rome seemed to the civilization of that time to portend the end of the world, the Church has chosen for its ideal and the goal of its faith, not the reign of a thousand years, but the *City of God,* a broad and beautiful city which shall gradually enlarge its gracious borders till they are one with the confines of the habitable earth. In the building of this city man joyfully coöperates with God because he has faith in its ultimate completion, a city purified of sin and all injustice, a city crowned with the presence of the Lord, a city called into being not by the magic rub of an Aladdin's lamp, but by the moral efforts of the race, as they are guided and inspired by the Spirit of God. In this faith it is possible still to repeat with all sincerity, though in a sense somewhat different from their original meaning, those beautiful lines of the post-Reformation hymn-writer, Isaac Watts:

> Religion bears our spirits up,
> While we expect that blessed hope,
> The bright appearing of our Lord,
> And Faith stands leaning on his Word.

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